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EDITED BY JAMES A. MANSON

JOHN CONSTABLE, R.A.

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John Constable
from the original by himself
in the National Portrait Gallery London.

A decorative border in blue ink, featuring a repeating pattern of stylized flowers and leaves, framing the entire text area.

John Constable

R.A.

BY

LORD WINDSOR

Illustrated with Photogravure Portrait and
Nineteen Plates and a Portrait of
David Lucas

London

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Preface.



JOHN CONSTABLE lived a quiet domestic life, without adventure, undisturbed by the violent political controversies of his time, and wholly engrossed in practising an art which he loved, but only finally adopted after he had reached the age of manhood. So it comes about that the story of his life is mainly to be found in the story of his pictures; and almost all that he said and did had reference either to his family and a few intimate friends, or to his work. Practically, all that is known of him is told in *The Memoirs of John Constable, R.A.*, by C. R. Leslie, R.A., his life-long friend and admirer. Moreover, it is excellently told, chiefly by means of his letters selected and edited by Leslie, with just sufficient comment of his own to connect them together and to fill up the gaps which such letters must inevitably leave when read by themselves. In his preface to the illustrated edition published in 1843, Leslie says: "The number of his letters placed in my hands has enabled

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me to give to the following pages, however unskilfully I may have done it, almost the form of an autobiography. Very few of these papers are printed entire, and the difficulty of selecting such portions of them as might best compose a narrative of his studies has not been trifling. It may perhaps be thought that too many circumstances merely of a domestic nature have been dwelt on; but in Constable the affections of the heart were so inseparably blended with all that related to painting, that it did not seem to me possible to give a true impression of his character as an artist, without making the reader intimately acquainted with him in the private relations of life."

Leslie was amply justified in the result. He has not overweighted his book with detail, nor has he given us scrappy quotations from his letters; the blend is an easy narrative of Constable's life, his cares, his ambitions, his failures and his successes, which gives the reader a very clear idea of the personality of this man who exercised so great an influence upon the landscape-painting of the nineteenth century.

This work was my main source of information until the private letters used by Leslie, letters from Constable to Archdeacon Fisher, to Mr. George Constable, to Dunthorne, and also letters from his mother and sisters, and his brother Abram to himself, fell into my hands;

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so that, although I have taken much from Leslie's Life, I have been able to make considerable additions to it from letters unused by Leslie, which are not, I hope, without interest. I am indebted to Mr. E. E. Leggatt for much valuable information concerning the preparation of Lucas's engravings of *English Landscape*, for a complete list of the Constable engravings, and for Lucas's notes, in his own handwriting, inscribed on his copy of Leslie's volume.

Leslie's *Memoirs of Constable* is now only to be obtained at the second-hand booksellers', and is therefore inaccessible to the majority of readers. This is my excuse for giving much space to the life of the painter, and for following closely, for a second time, the letters through which alone we can obtain an insight into the great artist's character.

In addition to the information I have found in this volume and the letters, I have collected such stories of Constable as I could find in C. R. Leslie's autobiography, in Mr. Frith's autobiography, in Mr. Frederick Wedmore's essay on "Constable," and such newspaper and review articles and notices as were published both during his lifetime and after his death, though of the former there are unfortunately very few. Of these perhaps the most important is the newspaper report of his Worcester lectures delivered

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in 1835. An exhibition of pictures was held in that city in 1834, to which Constable sent one picture which was favourably noticed. This was followed by another exhibition in 1835, wherein Constable was represented by five pictures. One of these was severely attacked, though in general they were much admired. It was not on this account, however, that he was persuaded to journey to Worcester, but to expose the fallacies of a critic who had been preaching Ideal Art, "which in Landscape," said Constable, "is sheer nonsense." I have to thank Mr. B. W. Leader, R.A., for his kindness in lending me two letters to his father, with whom Constable stopped on several occasions, and for some recollections of these visits.

Amongst Constable's papers, after his death, was found an abstract which he called "Little more than the recollection of a discourse delivered at the Hampstead Assembly Rooms in June, 1833." This he had evidently begun to commit to paper from memory, and probably intended to amplify. Leslie prints it in an appendix, and he has also put together the short notes for the four lectures delivered at the Royal Institution, and the last one at Hampstead. I can find no further records of these lectures.

As I am finishing my task, Mr. C. J. Holmes's magnificent illustrated volume, *Constable and his Influ-*

Preface

ence on Landscape Painting, has appeared, and no doubt much that I have written of the life of the painter will have been better said by Mr. Holmes, but his aim, as he tells us, has been not so much to write biography, as a critical study; his volume is, moreover, so sumptuously printed and so beautifully illustrated as to put it out of reach of the ordinary buyer. I can, therefore, only hope that some useful purpose may still be served by a *Life of Constable* in a cheaper form.

WINDSOR.

54 MOUNT STREET, W.,
May 7th, 1903.

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CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND APPRENTICESHIP.

Family pedigree—Birth of John Constable, June 11th, 1776—His youth—First attempts at sketching—John Dunthorne—Girtin's influence—Sir George Beaumont—First journey to London, 1795—The Dusty Miller—Finally goes to London to become an artist, 1799—Becomes a student at the Royal Academy, 1800—Old Suffolk—Constable's country—First picture at the Royal Academy, 1802—Declines the position of drawing-master—The altar-piece in Brantham Church, 1804—His mother's prophecy—The altar-piece in Nayland Church, 1809—Paints some portraits—Visits the English Lakes, 1806.

ACCORDING to a family pedigree before me, John Constable, R.A., traces his descent from the Constables of Chester, through a daughter, Agnes, married to Eustace Fitz John, whose son became Baron of Haillton and Constable of Chester in the reign of Henry II. In Richard I.'s reign this branch of the family appears to have

*Family
Pedigree*

John Constable, R.A.

settled in Yorkshire as Lords of Flamborough, and to have continued to live there until mention is made of one Golding Abram Constable of Bures St. Mary, son of Sir Marmaduke Constable of Everingham, second Baronet, as the first settler in Suffolk. His daughter and heiress married her cousin, John Constable, also of Bures, and to them was born Golding Constable of East Bergholt, the father of the artist.

This pedigree does not entirely agree with the inscription on the tomb in Bures Church, a copy of which Mary Constable sent to her nephew, John Charles, in 1839, when they were engaged in looking up their family history. It runs thus:—

“Here lyeth the remains of Hugh Constable of this parish, who departed this life May 15th, 1713, aged 48 years.

“Here lies also the body of Anne Constable, his wife, who departed this life Feb. 1st, 1739, aged 63 years. . . . They had four sons and two daughters—Hugh, Abram, John, Anni, Anni (*sic*), and Daniel.”

There is no record of a Golding here, and this Hugh Constable is not easily identified, as the only Hugh mentioned in the pedigree is a younger brother of John of Bures, whose father, Sir Philip, third Baronet, was only born in 1651, and could hardly have had a son in 1665. But it seems likely that Hugh was the

Birth and Christening

father of Golding Abram; at least he appears, as Mary says, to be the first Mr. Constable who came from Yorkshire, and was presumably the ancestor of the artist.

John's father, Golding Constable, was a kindly, affectionate man by all accounts, not unmindful of the comfort of his servants and those dependent on him, and was married to Ann Watts. He inherited Flatford water-mill from a rich uncle, was the owner also of Dedham water-mill, and of two wind-mills, so that he was altogether a notable miller, and built himself a substantial red brick house at East Bergholt, wherein, on June 11th, 1776, John Constable was born.

The first important event of his life, his christening, was performed in haste on his natal day, which, from the state of his health, was likely to be his last. These fears, however, happily proved baseless, as he became a strong and healthy child, and was able, in due course, to take his share, with other lads, in the floggings of the Lavenham usher under whose control a careless, courting headmaster left him. Before long he was removed to the more congenial atmosphere of the Grammar School at Dedham, where his artistic leanings first began to show themselves.

Birth

Constable's

Youth

John Constable, R.A.

At Dedham lived a plumber and glazier of the name of John Dunthorne, who occupied his leisure time in painting landscapes from nature: a friend-
First ship soon sprang up between them, and
Attempts at Constable became his constant companion.
Sketching His father, without objecting to this intimacy or to his son's occupation, had no wish that he should make painting a profession, and allowed him no opportunity of pursuing his studies at home, so that John Constable's early work was mainly done in the open air. The Church was the profession that his father would have chosen for him, but as the boy showed no inclination in this direction, he turned him into the mill. Being a well set-up, good-looking fellow, John went, among his neighbours, by the name of the "Handsome Miller."

It was while he was thus engaged that he obtained an introduction to Sir George Beaumont, who came frequently to Dedham to visit his mother, the Dowager Lady Beaumont. Sir George gave him his first sight of a picture by Claude ("The Annunciation," or "The
Girtin's Angel appearing to Hagar," now in the
Influence National Gallery, London), which made a very deep impression on him; but, perhaps, he was more directly influenced by the water-colour drawings by Girtin, which Sir George brought with him

Visit to London

to Dedham, and which he strongly advised young Constable to study.

Such occupation must have added fuel to the flame that burned within him, and about this time either his own importunity, or possibly Sir George's influence, induced his father to consent to his leaving the mill and journeying to London with a letter of introduction to the artist Farington in his pocket. He retained a great affection for Farington to the end, and after the latter's death, when Constable was looking out for a larger studio, he moved into Farington's. This visit to London in 1795, however, appears to have been but tentative; the die was not finally cast, nor his ultimate career decided upon. We find him writing in March 1797 to "Antiquity" Smith, whose acquaintance he had made in London, that he had determined to take his advice and attend to his father's business, a decision warmly approved of by his mother, who seemed to think the artist's profession not only precarious, but barely respectable. This resolution could not have lasted long, because 1799 was the important year in which he finally launched out into the artist's career, with, we must assume, his parents' consent.

The time spent in the mill business, however, was not wholly lost so far as regards his artistic training ;

*First
Journey to
London*

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he evidently kept his eyes open, so that when he came to paint windmills, as his brother said, "they will *go round*, which is not always the case with *The Dusty Miller* those painted by other artists." A rough sepia sketch of a windmill, probably done about 1830, is given in the Plate facing p. 16. Such sketches he used to make to explain his meaning to David Lucas, who, we shall afterwards find, was the engraver with whom he worked in the production of *English Landscape*. Concerning it, David Lucas writes to Mr. Hogarth:—"This blot of the Windmill has reference to the engraving of 'Spring' or 'The Mill on East Bergholt Common.' It was done to explain the altered shapes of the vanes in their different positions, for Mr. Constable pointed out that, as the generality of artists represented them, they would never turn round at all, whereas, if correctly done, a miller could tell not only what they were doing inside, but the direction and force of the wind blowing at that time. Perhaps this is the most interesting of the series from the circumstance that here Mr. Constable worked as a miller several years, and here he told me that he made his earliest studies and most useful observations on atmospheric effects. Mr. Constable's father, like Rembrandt's, was a miller. Mr. Sheepshanks told me when he visited the various scenes of English landscape

Handicapped

he found his name cut on one of the principal beams in the place."

John Constable was twenty-three years old in June, 1799, and had to begin the serious study of drawing and painting at an age when many young artists in happier and easier circumstances have already produced work of a high order.

Millais had painted "Lorenzo and Isabella" before he was twenty, and at the age of twenty-four had produced such works as

*Finally
goes to
London to
become an
Artist,
1799*

"The Huguenot," "The Proscribed Royalist," and "The Order for Release." Leighton's first picture in the Academy, "Cimabue's 'Madonna' carried through the Streets of Florence," was exhibited in 1855, when he was twenty-four, but he had been studying and painting in Florence and in Frankfort for at least ten years ere he was seen at Burlington House, and appeared in London a finished artist. Edwin Landseer was born in 1802, twenty-six years after Constable, but was elected A.R.A. at twenty-four (about the age when the latter was beginning his artistic studies), and R.A. in 1831, just two years after Constable had received this recognition.

It will thus be seen that he had not the same advantages in his youth as had those whose training for the profession of an artist was begun at an early

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age ; his work, therefore, before he was thirty, crude and amateurish as it will be seen to be in the examples at the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, must not be judged by the same standard as that of most other artists.

It was not until the following year that he was admitted a student at the Royal Academy. *Becomes a Student at the Royal Academy* This naturally kept him mainly in London, but whenever he could get away he appears to have run down to Suffolk, as his letters from Ipswich in August 1799, and Helmingham in 1800, testify.

Shoberl's *Beauties of England and Wales* informs us, of East Bergholt in 1818 or thereabouts, that "The residences of the Rector, the Rev. Dr. Rhudde, Peter Godfrey, Esq., Mrs. Roberts, and Golding Constable, *Old Suffolk* Esq., give the place an appearance far superior to that of most villages." Whether these residences exist now or not matters little.

Golding Constable's house, of the most consequence to us, was, I believe, pulled down years ago. But of much more importance is the existence, probably not much altered, of the Valley of the Stour, those Suffolk meadows, the clouds and locks which were the source of Constable's inspiration. Little of the mills, alas ! remains. So long ago as 1840, and so soon after

Suffolk Scenery

Constable had painted them, according to Leslie, they were disappearing :—" At Stratford we missed the picturesque little water-mill, with which the picture given by Fisher to Tinney had made us acquainted, in place of which now stands a huge brick building ;" and at Langham he found " all so much changed excepting the church, that we could scarcely recognise it as the scene of ' The Glebe Farm.' " In spite, however, of these inevitable changes much of old Suffolk and the Stour remains. Still there stands many an old cottage in a corn-field, with thatched roof, plastered walls, and wooden out-building, over which one side of the roof descends, as with protecting arm. Many a noble ash and many a pollard willow shade the sedgy pools from the July sun. Barges still navigate the waters of the Stour, and one is still touched by the purely English character of the scenery, which had such a powerful and lasting effect upon the mind of Constable.

At any rate, this is the country which he painted with so loving a brush, and which he seemed to prefer to any other ; and who shall say that he was wrong ? Ruskin declares that his early *Constable's* education and associations induced in him *Country* a morbid preference for subjects of a low order. But Ruskin was influenced by so many feelings, other than

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those purely artistic, in his appreciation of scenery and pictorial subjects, that his judgment cannot be relied on. To a true artist there is as much real beauty to be found in the quiet rural scenery of the Eastern Counties (did it not inspire Gainsborough, Crome, and the Norwich school of painters?) as in any outline of the Alps or steep precipice of the Dolomites. Jean François Millet once said, "Everything is proper to be expressed if only your aim be high enough." In that sentence he breathes the spirit of Constable, who, if he never uttered the words, was always fighting for the principle, and some twenty years later complains that he has to combat from high quarters, even from Lawrence, the plausible argument that the subject makes the picture. Not that this sentence of Millet's is quoted as the final word upon the subject. As a protest against the current false and conventional theories about what constituted a fine landscape it was rightly and truly said, but nothing is easier than to coin aphorisms to express a meaning which will lead others astray, supposing their reading be slightly different from yours. Millet obviously meant that no scene was too lowly, no condition of life too humble, to be worthy of the brush of a true artist, provided that he treated his subject with refinement and dignity. In other words, the sluggish river, the barge, and the village

At the Royal Academy

church, under the air of heaven, were as capable of suggesting noble thoughts as Dido building Carthage, or Hannibal crossing the Alps in a snowstorm. In this sense we may contrast Millet's words with some work of a much more modern school, where beauty of form and expression seem to be made subordinate, if not entirely sacrificed, to technical skill in execution, and where the subject may be described as a section or a slab of scenery, cut out of a larger area, with all the chance accessories of a given moment accurately portrayed. There is nothing in the work of Constable, still less of Millet, to lead one to suppose that they ignored the value of selection or were lacking in the sense of beauty of form and line.

The year 1802 is memorable as being the first in which Constable's name appears as an exhibitor in the Royal Academy. I can find no record of what the subject of the picture was beyond its title, "Landscape," or whether it received any attention, but doubtless he had many hours of depression at this time. He once brought a picture to Benjamin West, P.R.A., who cheered him up in a kindly manner, saying, "Don't be disheartened, young man; we shall hear of you again. You must have loved nature very much before you could have painted this," and made some corrections

*First
Picture at
the Royal
Academy*

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in chalk,—the best lecture on chiaroscuro, as Constable said, he ever had, because a practical one.

Benjamin West rendered him, however, a far greater service than this—a service for which Constable was eternally grateful, and for which all lovers of art should be grateful too. Dr. Fisher (afterwards Bishop of Salisbury), anxious only to help him to increase his income, had obtained for him a situation as drawing-master in a school. West not only dissuaded him from accepting the offer, but undertook to break his refusal to Dr. Fisher himself, so that his action should cause no offence. A letter to Dunthorne shows how thankful he was to be still free, and how seriously he intended to study and improve himself in the practice of art :—

*Declines
the
Position
of
Drawing-
Master*

“I am returned from a visit to Sir George Beaumont’s pictures with a deep conviction of the truth of Sir J. Reynolds’s observation that there is no easy way of becoming a good painter. It can only be obtained by long contemplation and incessant labour in the executive parts. And however one’s mind may be elevated and kept up to what is excellent by the works of the Great Masters, still Nature is the fountain’s head, the source from which all originality must spring ; and, should an artist continue his practice

Tradition of the Elders

without referring to Nature, he must soon form a *manner* and be reduced to the same deplorable situation as the French painter, mentioned by Sir J. Reynolds, who told him that he had long ceased to look at Nature, as she only put him out."

It was not until several years after 1802 that the real Constable appeared. His pictures and sketches at this time show that he had not freed himself from the tradition of the older painters, but was too much under the influence of Gainsborough, Wilson, and the Dutchmen to do justice to his own originality. In 1804 he painted an altar-piece for Brantham Church, "Christ Blessing Little Children," of no account. Mr. C. J. Holmes says it is "a feeble imitation of West's religious works, and shows that at the age of twenty-eight Constable was quite unable to paint a figure subject decently." His mother alone admired it, so much so that upon it she built great hopes of his future success. She writes to him from Epsom on April 28th, 1811:—"I am glad, for more reasons than one, that I have seen Mr. West's picture, of which I think highly, from the subject; but I speak from my own judgment of the performance, and have pleasure in the idea that your representation both of the admixture of the divine

The Altar-piece in Brantham Church

His Mother's Prophecy

John Constable, R.A.

and human form in the principal figure, the colouring of the drapery, and the representation of the Infant in your Brantham altar-piece is much more delightful to my eyes and my thoughts on the subject. The hands and the glory are fine, but the figure too plump and countenance too common a likeness to man, and the drapery, in point of colour, too pink and too blue, not crimson and Trojan purple; and the Infant, although *Sick unto Death*, yet no reason surely that the whole contour or form of the head should be so small; in truth, my dear John, though in all human probability my head will be laid low ere it comes to pass, yet with my present sight I can perceive no cause or just impediment that you should not in due time, with diligence and attention, be the performer of a picture worth £3000."

His second and last attempt at this class of subjects, some five years later, an altar-piece for
*Altar-piece in
Nayland Church* Nayland Church, proves that he had profited by a close study of Sir Joshua Reynolds's works obtained in copying some family pictures for Lord Dysart in 1807. Of this altar-piece, his uncle, David Pike Watts, says that *as a whole* it is a fine work, but he then proceeds to qualify his praise by making twenty-five distinct and numbered criticisms, the most important

Nayland Altar-piece

of which is No. 21 :—" The face, neck, and hands are left in an unfinished state, especially the two former; indeed, so crude and smeared as to show real haste and want of care: and although there may be some degree of danger in more finished touches of taking off *effect* (too common a complaint of portrait art), yet at the risk of losing some effect, it would be right to add a further *finish* to the Portrait. It is scarcely justifiable for any picture to be shown so *raw*, unless a testimony was affixed that the artist died before he could finish it; no other excuse can reconcile a picture being affixed for public view in so uncultivated a state. It is therefore earnestly to be wished that the artist would, next spring or summer, complete the face and neck, in justice to his own future fame, and to gratify the spectators. This last remark is made because its present smeared state grieves the writer, and although he has heard that a distinguished amateur artist sanctioned it in the room of the painter, it does not equally pass in its present *local site* under a large luminous window which greatly prejudices it."

Constable did no more of this kind of work, and fortunately, before long, gave up also all attempts at portraiture, in which he had several partial successes, such as the portrait of the Bishop of Salisbury and others, and to which his father and mother had

John Constable, R.A.

urged him to apply himself, no doubt on account of the surer income to be derived from it. Mr. W.

Paints Cuthbert Quilter possesses several family
some portraits which he painted—one of his
Portraits father, Golding Constable, another of his
brother Abram, and a third of his two
sisters Ann and Mary, one in a riding habit and
tall hat, and the other in a red cloak carrying a
bonnet in her hand. The portrait of his father—a
broad-faced, determined but kindly-looking man, the
face of one who is fair and just in his dealings with
others—is perhaps the best. The sisters are well
grouped, but none of these portraits displays any
mastery of handling or modelling, nor leads one to
think that he would have excelled in portraits as he
did in landscapes.

In 1806 he spent two months in the Lake country,
doing numerous sketches, some of which he exhibited
Visits the in the following years; but Westmorland
English and Cumberland could not have had the
Lakes same hold on his affection as Suffolk, to
which he always turned for the subjects of
any large pictures.



"A Windmill" (p 6).



CHAPTER II.

MARRIAGE.

Constable falls in love with Miss Bicknell, 1811—The inflexible Doctor—"Church Porch, East Bergholt"—Sells his first pictures, 1814—Facing the facts—Death of his mother, 1815—A birthday letter—Death of his father, 1816—His father's character—Dr. Rhudde's uncertain temper—Married on October 2nd, 1816—Dr. Rhudde relents—Again hardens his heart—Christmas influence—The open door—All's well that ends well.

FROM 1811 to 1816 were perhaps the most trying years of Constable's life. He fell in love with Miss Bicknell, and though she returned his affection, her parents opposed their union, and for a time there was no prospect of any change in their attitude towards him. Miss Bicknell was the daughter of Mr. Charles Bicknell, of Spring Gardens, London, a solicitor, who had married the daughter of the Rev. Dr. Rhudde, Rector of Bergholt, where Constable had made her acquaintance as early as the year 1800. Dr. Rhudde opposed the marriage, probably because he thought the miller's son, who had turned artist with but slender

*He falls
in love
with Miss
Bicknell*

John Constable, R.A.

prospects of an adequate income, was not a good enough match ; and Mr. Bicknell, whose own objections might have been removed, as his subsequent conduct proved, would run no risk of his daughter losing her grandfather's money. So the unhappy lovers were condemned to a period of indefinite patience, and the anxiety told upon Constable's health. He found his chief consolation during this sad time in his mother's sympathy and sound advice. Mrs. Constable writes to him in 1813 that Dr. Rhudde is going to Stratton Street for a month or five weeks—"I hope you will *The* make a point of calling—you must not kick *Inflexible* against the pricks. Nothing but courtesy *Doctor* will please in that quarter—an omission will offend." The whole of his family, indeed, were greatly concerned at the Doctor's inflexible attitude of hostility towards him, and wrote encouraging letters to him whenever the old man showed any signs of relenting.

That Maria Bicknell was a young lady of prudence and good sense is proved by her letters. She was wise enough to foresee the dangers of marriage without her parents' consent, and that "even painting could hardly survive in domestic worry." So she steadfastly withstood the prayers of her lover that she would consent to an immediate union, without losing hope that all would finally be well, and that their protracted patience

The "Church Porch"

would be rewarded. Thus Constable had to plod along without the help and encouragement of a sympathetic wife, at a time when, perhaps, he stood most in need of it. Not that he was particularly hardly used by fate—as artists go. That he was not appreciated as he ought to have been and would have been by a more discriminating public is a truism, but what painters of originality are? Is it not their privilege to be before their time and to appeal only to the few who can understand? And this applies especially to landscape painting, where the power of selection is greater than in portraiture, and individuality of expression less easily followed. At least he suffered no such treatment as did Théodore Rousseau at the hands of the Salon jury, by whom he was flouted and excluded for fourteen consecutive years. Nor was he like Corot, who never sold a picture until he was forty years of age. The "Church Porch, East Bergholt," was painted in 1811, and hangs in the National Gallery of British Art, London. It is a quiet scene, mellowed by the glow of evening sunlight, of a church porch backed by a group of trees, and with three figures resting amongst the tombstones. It recalls the Dutch painters, by whom he was still influenced, but with a more personal and more romantic note.

*"Church
Porch,
East
Bergholt"*

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Constable was not only beginning to do some very fine landscape work ; he was also beginning to find purchasers for it. He sold two landscapes in 1814. One was bought by Mr. Allnutt, an art patron living at Clapham, who, not quite liking the effect of sky, adopted the strange and unfair device of having it painted out and a new one substituted for it by another artist (Linnell). A few years afterwards, however, he repented, and came to Constable to ask him to restore the picture to its original state, at the same time requesting that it might be cut down a little to hang as a pendant to a Callcott. This, Constable, with great good nature, not only immediately consented to do, but actually painted him an entirely new picture of the same subject and of just the size he wanted, refusing to accept any further payment for it, on the ground of his gratitude to Mr. Allnutt for having been the purchaser of the first picture he had ever sold to a stranger, and for having thereby made a painter of him. Mr. Allnutt told Leslie of this incident in the year 1843, whilst the latter was writing Constable's life. The other was sold to Mr. Carpenter. The sale of these pictures, more than anything else, set a seal upon his decision to devote himself to this branch of art. Nevertheless, he had no illusions

Death of his Mother

about his unpopularity, for, of himself, on one occasion, he wrote on a loose sheet of paper—"My art flatters nobody by imitation, it courts nobody by smoothness, it tickles nobody by *petiteness*, it is without either fal-de-lal or fiddle-de-dee; how then can I hope to be popular?"

"Willy Lott's House" belongs to the year 1814; "Boat Building" and other Suffolk scenes to 1815. About this time we first hear of his old schoolfellow, John Fisher (afterwards Archdeacon), a nephew of the Bishop, who was not only one of his closest friends, but later became a valuable patron.

In 1815 Constable suffered a loss that he felt deeply: his mother had a paralytic stroke, and within a month of the first seizure she died. It cannot be doubted but that, in the formation of his character, Constable owed a great deal to his mother. She was a woman of piety, with a high moral standard and a strong sense of duty, and yet she was thoroughly practical and a woman of the world. Her brother, David Pike Watts, expostulated with her for this, and to him she replies:—"I love the writer, and I in general approve of his sentiments, but when he tells me I am worldly in my wishes and views for my son, I can but reply that, whilst we are on this earth, our plans and ideas must be worldly, even our dearest

*Death of
his Mother*

John Constable, R.A.

friendships here are enmity with God ; but I hope I do not lose sight and hopes of an hereafter for me and all I hold dear." She was a devoted mother, following her son's career with never-ceasing watchfulness, in full sympathy with his artistic aspirations, and at the same time careful that he should not neglect those trifling rules of conduct, the observance of which is so necessary to some measure of worldly success. In all his struggles to improve himself and to succeed in his profession, she it was who gave him constant encouragement, and cheered him with praise. She it was who, more than any other, sympathised with his feelings towards Miss Bicknell, and did all in her power to propitiate the grandfather, even to sending him as a gift from her son a water-colour drawing which she described as the most beautiful drawing she had ever beheld, and which was in reality a present to herself. However much she disapproved of the treatment he received from the Bicknell family and Dr. Rhudde, she always gave him counsels of prudence, to bear patiently his disappointment, to build confident hopes on the knowledge of his own constancy and that of the lady of his affections, and to work hard in order to win that recognition from the art world and the public by which alone he could claim a right to Maria's hand.

As an instance of her anxiety for his advancement

His Mother's Counsel

and success, I quote part of a letter dated June 10th, 1813, written to him on his thirty-eighth birthday:—
“My Dear John,—I write to you this day because I wish it to come to your hands to-morrow, the 11th inst., the anniversary of your birth, which is not forgotten by me; and I most earnestly wish you may experience many returning birthdays with happiness and comfort. Much, very much, of this depends upon your own mind and exertions, for you cannot have lived thirty-seven years without knowing that; and I do hope the sight you have so lately seen in the exhibition of Sir Joshua Reynolds's performances will stimulate your exertions to promote your own emolument, and your parents' and friends' hopes and wishes. See what has been done by one bright genius and one pair of hands! Who can then be satisfied with one landscape and a few sketches and some unfinished portraits for an annual employment? Do, my dearest son, exert yourself, or you must pine away your own prime, and fret away the aged remnant of your parents' lives. Your heart is so kind and so good, and your mind so well furnished, that you have great advantages if you would but improve them. You need never want for friends if you will but be a friend to yourself. Your mother has a peculiar claim to tell you the truth, and you

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would treat her with unkindness not to believe her, and know her motive to be good. Would you but make yourself independent how much would you exalt my heartfelt anxieties on your account! Your valuable uncle, D. P. W. [atts], is kind and good, but the best friend will tire of giving and lending without they see great industry and a desire to gain, which must be in such times and such a world as this; but we are fast travelling to another and a better, if we live and act uprightly." This letter is only one of many of the same kind, full of sound advice, urging him, for his own sake, to exert himself to the utmost. It can easily be imagined how great a gap in his life his mother's death created. Mrs. Bicknell appears to have died about this time also, for in one of Constable's letters to her daughter he writes: "It is singular that we should have both lost our best friends in this world within so short a space of time."

By the end of the year he was again in great anxiety about the health of his father, and in May 1816 Golding
Death of Constable also died; so that, besides the
his Father anxiety incidental to a want of public appreciation, and in addition to the worries of his love affair, which prospered not, the years 1815 and 1816 were darkened by the loss of both his parents, to whom he was deeply attached. Golding Constable has



"Church Porch, East Bergholt" (p. 19).

His Father's Character

already been described as a kindly man, mindful of the welfare and comfort of all those about him. As an instance of his consideration for his servants, it is related that he wished, on one occasion, to remove a bargeman from one cottage to another. For some time he could neither get the man to stir nor get a reason for his refusal. At last the man said: "If I leave this place I shall never be able to shave again." This singular remark greatly excited Mr. Constable's curiosity, and on further inquiry the man's explanation was that for years on Sundays he had sharpened his razor on the top step of the stairs and could not now do without it. Said his master: "If that is all, the carpenter shall take up the step for you to carry away, and the stairs, too, if you want them!" On his death-bed he called in his aged clerk, who had been privy to all his dealings, and, as a dying man, asked him if he could recollect an instance in which he had dealt unfairly or taken advantage of the necessities of the poor, the widow, or the fatherless, that he might make compensation whilst he had the power. The clerk found on consideration no trace left on his memory of a single act of that kind.

*His
Father's
Character*

Just before his father's death occurred an incident which, at first sight, seemed only to add to his troubles,

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though, as it afterwards turned out, it was the means of putting an end to his suspense, and of permitting the long-hoped-for marriage to take place. It happened

Dr. thus. Mr. Bicknell had for the past year
Rhudde's allowed him to visit his daughter at Spring
uncertain Gardens, but without the knowledge of Dr.
Temper Rhudde. By chance the latter discovered
what was going on, and wrote to her father,
Miss Bicknell says, "*such* a letter that I tremble with
having heard only part of it read." In short, he ceased
to consider her any longer as his grand-daughter (he
eventually relented, and left her a legacy of £4000 at
his death). This blow, so much dreaded by her father,
which still seemed to him a reason for delay, acted
differently upon her. She felt no longer compelled to
sacrifice her own and her lover's happiness to the
caprice of one who had forfeited his claim to obedience,
and she therefore consented to be wedded without
further delay, and they were married by Archdeacon
Fisher at the church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields,
London, on October 2nd, 1816.

After the marriage had actually taken place Dr.
Rhudde does not appear to have remained
Married of the same mind about it. He had evidently
lost his temper on hearing of the lovers'
meetings in Spring Gardens; but some three weeks after

Dr. Rhudde

the wedding brother Abram writes that a friend of theirs called at the Rectory and was invited to tell the Constables that the Doctor would be happy to see them and to receive them as usual.

“My sisters,” he continues, “of course took the earliest opportunity to call, and were received with great politeness by the Doctor, who, after some time, introduced the subject of your marriage. He was quite as favourable as they expected, and more so indeed, said many things that had been said before, that you might both have done better, that you were a fine, handsome man, and could have married a woman of good fortune, etc., and many such things which I cannot repeat, nor is it necessary. Upon the whole my sisters were impressed with the idea of time and patience setting all things square, which I pray God most fervently may be the case, and which desirable event a conciliatory mode of conduct will tend to effect. May we not look forward to good prospects when crimes stare us not in the face? And what crime, may I ask, has been committed? Great stress, I find, is laid upon example to younger sisters not to act contrary to parents’ wishes, but all this is not for me to enter upon; a line of prudent conduct, neither irritating nor being irritated, is, as I have said before, the wisest plan. Mr. Travis . . . told us

*Dr.
Rhudde
relents*

John Constable, R.A.

he had seen the Doctor the day before my sisters called there, and found him at first rather violent, but softened considerably before he left him. He said, 'I'll not leave her a shilling.' Mr. T. replied, 'For God in *aven's* sake, Doctor, think of what you are doing, persecuting her in your life, and after your death too ; pray consider this. I'll tell you what Mr. Nunn has done with his daughter, and no child can have treated a father worse than she has done: he has left her a child's part, secured to her and to her children, if she has any, and left her husband out of the question.' The Doctor replied, 'Then I will do the same and leave Maria a child's part, but with some little difference, for acting contrary to friends' wishes.' On parting Mr. T. said, 'You will not depart from what you have said, Doctor.' He replied, 'I will not.' Thus far is something at this early stage, and not only Travis but all in the village and around us are friendly to you, and I have no doubt things will work round, and that we may still see you and your deservedly beloved Maria received graciously at the Rectory."

So far matters had gone well enough, but two months afterwards either the cold winds of December, or perhaps a fit of the gout, hardened the Doctor's heart again.

Constable's sister Ann writes on December 15th,

Dr. Rhudde Obdurate

1816:—"Mr. Travis called here yesterday afternoon and came again in the evening, having in the interval been at the Rectory and seen the Doctor. In the course of conversation he said, 'I hear, Doctor, Mr. and Mrs. Constable would much like to visit Bergholt.'

*Rhudde
hardens
his Heart*

"'If they do, and call upon me, I will not see them.'

"'The family, Doctor, would be happy to receive them, but are unwilling to give offence to you.'

"'If they send to the family they are coming, they cannot prevent it.'

"'Perhaps, Doctor, they had better come in your absence, as it would be so unpleasant not to see them.'

"'I must see them if they come to church, but I will not at my house; therefore in my absence it would be most prudent.'

"This is *verbatim* what Mr. Travis told us. As he (the Doctor) will be in town on the 15th of January, suppose you defer bringing my sister till after that day, as should the Rectory party be ever so friendly inclined (and I really believe they are), they cannot act diametrically opposite to their *Patron's* sentiments. Thus, my dear John, I have been candid upon the subject. Have patience and keep silence, and see what time may produce. No good can result from war with a stronger power. Nor think too hardly of Mr. Bicknell; all here

John Constable, R.A.

say *it is the Doctor speaking through him*, and that he is not a free agent. In himself he is a most kind-hearted, good man, but for the good of his children, whom he tenderly loves, he is obliged to submit to the Doctor's tyrannical yoke—and we all know what that is. You can come at any time to pack up and superintend your own affairs. Do not doubt the sincere pleasure it would give us to receive you both, but under present circumstances I really think you had better defer it for the present."

This, fortunately, was but a passing mood. Christmastide, with its appeal to good-fellowship and goodwill, soon restored the Doctor's equanimity, *Christmas Influence* and we find a letter from Mary Constable sending John the good news. It is dated January 12th, 1817:—

"You must excuse this hasty letter, as the time is so short before the postman is ready, neither should I have written at all on this day but upon a very pressing subject, and what so greatly concerns your interest. Your most active and most earnest friend, Mr. Travis, urges me to tell you that he has this day seen Doctor R., and that they conversed freely upon what passed between himself and you, and that nothing can appear to be more propitious towards you and yours than the Doctor's present sentiments. Mr. Travis does not wish

Reconciliation

you to take any notice of having heard from me anything that passes between himself and the Doctor; only he thinks it may encourage you to know how things stand. He was so kind as just to look in upon us last night, and told us all he could to make us

happy. He says, 'the broad gate is open, *The Open Door* not the narrow one'; you must not let it

shut upon you. The Doctor acknowledged the pleasure he received by the account Mr. Travis gave him of your intention towards Mr. B [icknell] and himself, and that he is ready to do all in his power to make you and yours happy. Mr. Travis never recollects having seen the Doctor in such 'high feather,' who says he does not wish you to degrade yourself, but only to make a proper apology to Mr. B [icknell] and himself and all would be well. How happy I feel at your prospect, and how anxious I am till all is settled; indeed, we are all looking forward to a reconciliation so earnestly to be wished, and then trust that all will be well. The Doctor thinks that Mr. Travis has acted a very friendly part, and was very much obliged to him. What must we be!"

After reading these letters of Abram and Mary Constable there is no difficulty in filling in the portrait of Dr. Rhudde, or of understanding what manner of man he was. A choleric old autocrat, impatient of

John Constable, R.A.

all opposition, before whom no one of the family dared to stand up, his uncertainty of temper did but increase with old age. But at bottom he had a kindly nature, and in the absence of east wind, the gout, or other distemper, his heart softened, and so far as personal dignity would allow, he forgave, as a wise man should, when further opposition would have been both useless and vindictive. Mr. Travis was Dr. Rhudde's medical attendant and a true friend of the family; he played the part of mediator with tact and skill, and it is quite possible that, without his intervention, a reconciliation would never have taken place.



“Hampstead.”

CHAPTER III.

STUDENT OF NATURE.

Constable's happiest years—Eldest son born—"The White Horse," 1819—Archdeacon Fisher—Becomes A.R.A., 1819—Hampstead—"The Young Waltonians," 1820—"The Hay Wain," 1821—The essence of Landscape—Bagnigge Wells—His close study of Nature—Sky work—Nature's book—Not a novel-reader—"The River Stour," 1822—Wanted for France—Moves to 35 Charlotte Street—An observer of Weather—Criticises the pictures at the British Gallery—A period of illness—"Poor Read"—"Salisbury Cathedral," 1823—Tripping Turner—Fuseli calls for his umbrella—Fame and famine—The advice of wiseacres—Visits Coleorton—The Beaumonts—Enthusiasm for Claude—Overwork—Sturdy Stothard—A country walk—Future plans—"The Lock," 1824—Pictures for Paris—Mr. Arrowsmith—Death of Byron.

THERE can be no doubt but that the ten years following his marriage were the happiest of Constable's life. Leslie tells us that he remembers him living in 1817 in a small house in Keppel Street, Russell Square, London, where his eldest son, John, was born. He was devoted to him, and indeed to all his children, and Leslie adds, "His

*His
Happiest
Years*

John Constable, R.A.

fondness for children exceeded that of any man I ever knew."

At this time Constable was contributing to the London exhibitions a considerable number of pictures, amongst others "Flatford Mill," whose latent beauties Leslie says "were passed wholly unnoticed . . . while more showy works, by artists whose very names are now nearly forgotten, were the favourites of the day." But in the Academy, 1819, appeared "A View on the Stour," subsequently called "*The White Horse*" (in the collection of Mr. Pierpont Morgan). This was the largest canvas he had ever attempted, and the picture attracted more attention than any of his previous ones. He priced it at 100 guineas, exclusive of the frame, and it was bought by Archdeacon Fisher, who rendered him this important service at a time when it was greatly needed; but the Archdeacon bought well, and proof of his discrimination and good taste was found in the sale of this picture seventy-five years later, in 1894, for 6,200 guineas. Sir Martin Archer Shee thought this the finest of all his works. The artist afterwards bought the picture back for the price the Archdeacon paid for it.

Constable was always deeply grateful to Fisher for this and other proofs of his friendship, and for his

A. R. A.

unfailing encouragement when others passed him by with complete indifference:—"Believe me, my very dear Fisher, I should almost faint by the way when I am standing before my large canvases were I not cheered and encouraged by your friendship and approbation. I now fear (for my family's sake) I shall never be a popular artist, a Gentlemen and Ladies' painter, but I am spared making a fool of myself—and your hand stretched forth teaches me to value my own natural dignity of mind (if I may say so) above all things; this is of more consequence than Gentlemen and Ladies can well imagine, as its influence is very apparent in a painter's works. Sometimes the *éclat* of other artists occasionally crosses my mind, but I look at what I possess and find ample consolation."

*Arch-
deacon
Fisher*

In November of 1819 Constable was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy, and however galling may have been the public indifference, this recognition of his merits by his brother artists must have been particularly gratifying. "I reckon it," wrote Archdeacon Fisher in congratulating him, "no small feather in my cap that I have had the sagacity to find them out." At this moment of success a much needed addition to his slender income came to him in the shape of

*Becomes
A.R.A.,
1819*

John Constable, R.A.

£4000, which was his share in the division of his father's property.

In 1820 begins his connection with Hampstead, *Hampstead* for he settled his wife and children there, though he himself probably remained and worked chiefly in Keppel Street.

The "White Horse" may be said to be the beginning of the series of magnificent pictures on which Constable's fame chiefly rests. A large view of Stratford Mill on the Stour, engraved by Lucas under the title of "The Young Waltonians," because of the children fishing in the foreground, a group of which Sir G. Beaumont said that the biggest boy was undergoing the agony of a bite, was also bought by the Archdeacon for 100 guineas and exhibited in 1820. It was about the same size as the "White Horse," and Archdeacon Fisher gave it to Mr. Tinney of Salisbury, his solicitor, to whom he was under some obligation, for services which he had lately rendered to him; but considering the price which he paid for it, far below its real value, he refers to it in a letter to Constable as "our joint present."

Lucas says: "Mr. Constable explained to me the natural history (if I may so call it) of this picture. Among his remarks were the following, that when

“The Hay Wain”

water reaches the roots of certain plants or trees, the action on the extremities of their roots is such that they no longer vegetate but die, which explains the appearance of the dead tree at the edge of the stream. The principal group of trees being exposed to the currents of wind blowing over the meadows continually acting on their boles inclines them from their natural upright position and accounts for their leaning to the right side of the picture.” These, especially the latter, are very simple effects of nature, but that Lucas should think them worth recording shows how little landscape painters of that day observed these common effects in their conventional striving after the “grand style.”

In 1821 came “Landscape, Noon,” afterwards known as the “Hay Wain,” now in the National Gallery, London. “The Hay Wain” Constable speaks of as going to the Royal Academy on April 10th. “It is not,” he writes, “so grand as *“The Hay Wain”* Tinney’s. Owing, perhaps, to the masses not being so impressive, the power of the chiaroscuro is lessened, but it has a more novel look than I expected. I have yet much to do to it, and I calculate on three or four days there. I hear of so many clever pictures for the Exhibition, especially by ex-members, that it must be a capital show. They are chiefly in the historical and fancy line. I hear little of Landscape, and why? The

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Londoners, with all their ingenuity as artists, know nothing of the feeling of a country life (the essence of Landscape), any more than a hackney coach horse knows of pasture. Collins requested me to return

The with him to see a Landscape by himself for
Essence of the exhibition. It was beautifully painted,
Landscape and I thought the subject might be about
the neighbourhood of Bagnigge Wells;

but he named a scene in the most romantic glen in Westmorland as the identical spot he had painted.

This, I am sure, will never do as Landscape painting. But I stand on ticklish ground, though that ground is my own; and one might soon get involved in jarring, and make one's life uncomfortable. Friendship and a well-regulated mind are things worth attaining, if possible." All trace of Bagnigge Wells has disappeared save the name, which is preserved as the sign

Bagnigge of a public-house in King's Cross Road,
Wells London. In Walter Thornbury's *Old and New London* (1887) we find that Bagnigge

House was formerly the summer residence of Nell Gwynne, wherein she used to entertain Charles II. with concerts and merry breakfasts. The neighbourhood was called Bagnigge Vale, and the house and grounds became a place of entertainment for rustivating Londoners as early as the year 1680. In 1760 the

Painter Critics

discovery of two mineral springs in the garden gave to it and the adjoining road the name of Bagnigge Wells. The latter was changed in 1863 to King's Cross Road.

About this time he had read Matthews's *Diary of an Invalid*, and *apropos* of his horror at finding therein a suggestion that Gaspar Poussin's defects might be remedied by "our own Glover," Constable writes, "This is too bad, and one would throw the book out of window, but that its grossness is its own cure, and one is led on, for the fun of the thing, to be amused with the novelty of shapes which Ignorance appears in. . . . I dined last week at Sir George Beaumont's, met Wilkie, Jackson, and Collins; it was quite amusing to hear them talk about Martin's picture. Sir George said some clever things about it, but he added, 'Even allowing the composition to be something (its only merit), still if the finest composition of Handel's was played entirely out of tune, what would it be?' It was droll to hear Wilkie say, 'Gentlemen, ye are too severe,' and then say something ten times worse than had yet been said." The Bishop and Mr. Fisher had attacked him about Martin's *pantomime*, as he calls it, but he spoke his mind out, as was his wont. This was evidently a picture subject to much ridicule. The Martin here

John Constable, R.A.

referred to was John Martin, known as "Paradise" Martin, the historical and landscape painter.

In 1822 Constable painted the large "View on the Stour." A full-sized study, dated 1822, of this picture is in the gallery of Holloway College at Egham, purchased in 1883 at the Dunlop sale. At the same time

His close he was making many careful studies of
Study of trees and skies at Hampstead, carried
Nature farther than any he had done before. On
the question of skies his letter of October 23rd, 1821, is worth quoting, showing how the love of Nature was too strong to keep him tied by old-fashioned ideas and principles.

"I have not been idle, and have made more particular and general study than I have ever done in one summer. But I am most anxious to get into my London painting-room, for I do not consider myself at work without I am before a six-foot canvas. I have done a good deal of skying. I am determined to conquer all difficulties, and that most arduous one among the rest. The landscape-painter who does not make his skies a very material part of his composition, neglects to avail himself of one of his greatest aids. Sir Joshua Reynolds, speaking of the landscapes of Titian, of Salvator, and of Claude, says, 'Even their skies seem to sympathise with their subjects.' I have often



"Flatford Mill" (p. 34).

Skies in Landscape

been advised to consider my sky as *a white sheet thrown behind the objects*. Certainly if the sky is obtrusive, as mine are, it is bad; but if it is evaded, as mine are not, it is worse; it must and always shall with me make an effectual part of the composition. It will be difficult to name a class of landscape in *Sky work* which sky is not the keynote, the standard of scale, and the chief organ of sentiment. You may conceive, then, what a 'white sheet' would do for me, impressed as I am with these notions, and they cannot be erroneous. The sky is the source of light in Nature, and governs everything; even our common observations on the weather of every day are altogether suggested by it. The difficulty of skies in painting is very great, both as to composition and execution; because with all their brilliancy, they ought not to come forward, or, indeed, be hardly thought of any more than extreme distances are; but this does not apply to phenomena or accidental effects of sky, because they always attract particularly. I may say all this to you, though *you* do not want to be told that I know very well what I am about, and that my skies have not been neglected, though they have often failed in execution, no doubt from an over-anxiety about them, which will alone destroy that easy appearance which Nature always has in all her movements.

John Constable, R.A.

“How much I wish I had been with you on your fishing excursion in the New Forest! What river can it be? But the sound of water escaping from mill-dams, etc., willows, old rotten planks, slimy posts, and brickwork—I love such things. Shakespeare could make everything poetical; he tells us of poor Tom’s haunts among ‘sheep-cotes and mills.’ As long as I do paint I shall never cease to paint such places. They have always been my delight, and I should indeed have been delighted in seeing what you describe, and in your company—‘in the company of a man to whom Nature does not spread her volume in vain.’ Still, I should paint my own places best. Painting is with me but another word for feeling, and I associate my ‘careless boyhood’ with all that lies on the banks of the Stour. Those scenes made me a painter, and I am grateful—that is, I had often thought of pictures of them before I ever touched a pencil, and your picture is the strongest instance of it I can recollect; but I will say no more, for I am a great egotist in whatever relates to painting. My last year’s work has got much together. This weather has blown and washed the *powder* off. I do not know what I shall do with it; but I love my children too well to expose them to the taunts of the ignorant, though

Devotion to Nature

they shall never flinch from honourable competition."

I have quoted this letter nearly in full, because, in his own words, it gives the essence of Constable's work, his enthusiasm for the country, his devotion to "Nature's varying moods," so whole-hearted that, apart from domestic life and his few intimate friends, he thought of little else. "I do not think he ever read a novel in his life," writes Leslie. "It was on no narrow principle that he objected to works of fiction, but they did not interest him." One must imagine that all the emotions which such literature is wont to raise in others, Constable found in his absorption in the study of Nature's glories. There is evidence, however, of his having read one novel, at least, because he mentions in his journal having been sent a book called *Our Village*, by Miss Mitford. "Too childish and unnatural for me," are his comments; "it seems done by a person who had made a visit from London for the first time, and, like a Cockney, was astonished at everything she saw." As he got so little pleasure or satisfaction from its perusal, it need not surprise us that he was discouraged from further experiment in this line of literature, and preferred more serious reading.

*Not a
Novel-
reader*

John Constable, R.A.

In 1822 Constable sent the large picture of the River Stour to the Academy, and never worked so hard in his life. “I have not heard a word from Somerset House [where the Royal Academy then held its exhibitions] whether my picture will do me credit or otherwise. I saw Collins; he said *nothing*, but last year he told me my picture wanted a great deal.” Although he could get nothing out of Collins himself, a friend was more successful, and Collins told Manning, on his asking if it was not better than any Constable had yet done, that it was; “the sky was very beautiful, and there were parts in it that could not be better; and he finished the compliment by saying, ‘It is an acknowledgment in Constable that he was wrong *before* and that *we* were right; and I hope it will do him a great deal of good.’ Some of the parts were very nicely finished, but you see how painters compliment one another. His own pictures are unusually well painted this year, none better; but all complain of want of impression and sentiment. His canvas is certainly not affecting, though his pencil is firm and delicate; but he is too great a man now for me to venture to anatomise.”

Again Constable writes: “I am anxious about this picture. Clint, my neighbour, who expects to be an

A French Bid

Academician before me, called to see it. He always praised me. Now he said not a word, but on leaving the room he looked back and said he hoped *his picture* would not hang near it."

Before the Academy closed Constable had some nibbles at this large picture. He had an offer of £70, without the frame, the picture being intended to form part of an exhibition *Wanted for France* in Paris, to show the French the nature of English art. Badly in want of money as he was, he was in doubt whether to close with this offer or not, but decided against it. "I shall not let the Frenchman have my picture. It would be too bad to allow myself to be knocked down by a Frenchman! In short, it may fetch my family something one time or another, and it would be disgracing my diploma to take so small a sum, less by near one-half than the price I asked." This client was Mr. Arrowsmith, with whom in 1824 he afterwards came to terms, and through whose persistency Constable's pictures eventually entered the Salon.

As this work made him look about for a more commodious studio, he moved into Farington's house, 35 Charlotte Street, London, during the autumn. "In Keppel Street we wanted room, and were like bottled wasps upon a southern wall; but the five

John Constable, R.A.

happiest years of my life were passed there." He writes at this time to Lane, a portrait-painter, and a pupil of Sir Thomas Lawrence—(Lane, by the way, was deaf and dumb, but owing to Constable's knowledge of the alphabet used in such cases the friends were able to converse as fluently as if no impediment existed):—"I have been with my wife to look over Mr. Farington's house, which has left a deep impression on us both. I could scarcely believe that I was not to meet the elegant and dignified figure of our departed friend, where I had so long been used to see him, or hear again the wisdom that always attended his advice, which I do indeed miss greatly."

His time was now spent chiefly between Charlotte Street and Hampstead. During the summer in the latter place he was in reality working hard; he mentions doing fifty careful studies of skies tolerably large; and Leslie tells us of twenty of these in his possession that they were painted in oil on large sheets of thick paper (paper absorbs the oil, which probably gave it advantages, in his opinion, over canvas for these rapid studies), all dated, with memoranda on the backs stating the time of day, direction of the wind, and possibly the particular use to which the sketch was to

*Moves to 35
Charlotte
Street*

*An
Observer
of Weather*

The Downward Grade

be turned. And yet, so anxious is he to be back at the large canvases in Charlotte Street that he writes: "Hampstead is a ruinous place to me. I lose time here sadly." Accordingly we find him soon afterwards arranging his new studio, and contentedly at work on two six-footers, one of which is to be sent to the gallery at £200, "or I may keep it; for the time will come when they will fetch some *dealer* £500."

He thought very poorly of the picture exhibitions in England at this time:—"Three Associates are to be chosen next Tuesday out of forty candidates at the Royal Academy. They are at a loss entirely. There is not an artist among them. It is recommended that the Secretary put them into a bag. Could you but see the folly and ruin exhibited at the British Gallery you would go mad. Van de Velde, Gaspar Poussin, and Titian are made to spawn multitudes of abortions; and for what are the great masters brought into this disgrace? Only to serve the purpose of sale." This was the fault, he maintained, of the Directors of the British Institution, who drove these pictures into the empty heads of junior artists—a fault, be it observed, not in allowing copies of these old masters to be made, but in exhibiting shadows of them afterwards as original work. Sir George Beaumont, with

*Criticises
the
Pictures at
the British
Gallery*

John Constable, R.A.

his brown tree in his brain, though always kind and courteous to Constable, was quite unable to appreciate him, and such as he must have been referred to when Constable proposed to grime down a picture with slime and soot, because he thought that the purchaser, as a connoisseur, would prefer filth and dirt to freshness and beauty. This seems to have been the opinion also of William Hazlitt, who, in one of the Round Table essays, while lashing the bad taste of connoisseurs, brackets the Directors between picture-dealers and the members of the Royal Academy as the worst judges of pictures in the United Kingdom. All this shows how far ahead of ordinary criticism Constable was, and how courageously he followed his own ideal in spite of seeing the work of others, of vastly inferior merit, preferred to his.

In the winter of 1822-23 Constable fell upon a time of illness which attacked him and his whole household, but it was especially about his son, John, who was seriously ill, that he was anxious. *A Period of Illness* These family troubles tried his temper, and he upbraids Fisher for neglecting him and not writing, except two hasty half-sheets during the last three months, and these only to encumber him with "the *wretched* Read and his *wretched* pictures." Read was a poor Salisbury artist, whose singular figure,



“Harwich.”

Read of Salisbury

waving locks on his shoulders, white hat, long greatcoat, large shoes with small buckles on the sides, and a portfolio under his arm, had surprised the Constable family at breakfast in the summer of 1821. On that occasion his heart was touched by his simple tale and signs of poverty. He recommended Read to Archdeacon Fisher, asking him to show him some civility, praising his studies, and saying that he had been shamefully treated by his friend (and brother Baptist) little Linnell, the artist. But now Read was too much for his overwrought nerves:—"Poor Read I am anxious about, 'tis true. I excited your neighbourly benevolence towards him for the sake of his innocent family, but that certainly would not have been the case had I thought it would have brought him one step nearer this dreadful *field of battle*, on which so much worth and innocence are doomed to perish. None of his pictures are received at the Gallery; no one who saw them for a moment expected they would. Thus has he involved himself in no small expense to get rid of his little local reputation. Prevail upon him to quit a profession he cannot fail to disgrace, for the truth must now be told to *you*, which is, that he is ignorant of every rudiment of art, without one grain of original feeling, without an atom of talent, and able

"Poor
Read"

John Constable, R.A.

only to do something worse than nothing at thirty years of age."

There could be no hope for Read after that, even though the criticism of him was somewhat highly coloured by personal worries and anxieties. But Constable could not get rid of him in a hurry, for his next letter is full of complaints of his extreme ignorance, vanity, and inordinate selfishness.

These troubles kept him from his work for some time, and although in February he put a large upright picture in hand, he was unable to get it ready for the Academy of 1823. His "Salisbury Cathedral" was there, much admired, and even he himself was satisfied.

"Salisbury Cathedral" He considered it the most difficult landscape he ever had on his easel:—"I have not flinched from the windows, buttresses, etc., but I have . . . as usual made my escape

in the evanescence of the chiaroscuro. Callcott admires my Cathedral, and says I have managed it well. He has a poor picture there himself, and Turner is stark mad with ability; the picture (Turner's) seems painted with saffron and indigo. Northcote gave him a sad trip up at starting. He was on my arm when Turner asked him if he (Turner) was in his senses? Northcote said, 'No, certainly you must be mad to do such a thing; but

Fuseli's Umbrella

I tell you over and over again, if you will persist in imitating *Martin* you must be ruined.' Turner has often spoken of this as a good *joke*, but, as Southey would say, it sticks, as it is too true and pungent to be laughed away."

Fuseli, too, who always made some amusing remarks on the pictures in his broken English, praised Constable's work:—"He is always picturesque, of a fine colour, and delights always in de right places; but he makes me call for my great-coat and umbrella." A story is told of Fuseli that on one occasion when the students of the Royal Academy became unruly and fell to romping he lost his temper, and after lecturing them on their conduct, ended up, saying, "You are a parcel of damned wild beasts, and I am your one damned keeper."

In 1823 Constable sent "Yarmouth Jetty" to the British Gallery, and to the Royal Academy "Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's grounds," "A Study of Trees," and "A Cottage." During the summer the whole family recovered their health and Constable his spirits, as he always did when he could turn to on his large canvases. On July 3rd he writes to Fisher, "I have been a day or two at Southgate at Judkins'; he is a sensible

John Constable, R.A.

man and you always thought so, but he will paint. We dined at Sir William Curtis's. He is a fine old fellow, and is now sitting for his portrait to Lawrence for the King, who desired the portrait in these words, 'Damn you, my old boy, I'll have you in all your canonicals, when I can look at you every day;' he is a great favourite—birds of a feather. . . . A great row with Turner and Collins, but we are all square again. The latter showed me a pretty picture he is now painting, but it is insipid, far too pretty to be natural." Constable concludes his letter by saying, "I am struggling with fame and famine." He criticises the Royal Academy Exhibition, saying "that it has not been so productive as that of last year, for obvious reasons. Look at the walls, Academicians claim the places their rank gives them, and you saw how the walls were filled. Old Daniell and young Daniell, old Reinagle and young Reinagle, Northcote, etc., etc., all of John Bull notoriety. I only fear the foundations of those walls are bad; if so, it must tumble altogether."

About this time there was some discussion as to his getting one of his pictures from Mr. Tinney, who had apparently expressed dissatisfaction with it, in order to make some alterations. Fisher was the go-between, and in writing to tell Constable that Tinney reluctantly consented, mentions what others are saying about him,

What Others were Saying

that he has taken to repeating himself—warns him against this danger, and urges him to beware lest it should be said of his pictures, as of Claude's,

“When you have seen one you have seen all. . . . I hope you will diversify your subjects this year as to *time of day*. ”

*The
Advice of
Wiseacres*

Thomson, you know, wrote not four Summers, but four Seasons. People get tired of mutton at top, mutton at bottom, and mutton at the side, though of the best flavour and smallest size.” Constable was grateful for these friendly words of advice:—“I shall always be glad to hear anything that is said of me and my pictures. My object is the improvement of both. When Nat. Hone's malignant picture, ‘The Conjuror’ (meant to ruin Sir Joshua Reynolds's fair fame), came to the Exhibition, the members were for rejecting it. ‘No,’ said Sir Joshua, ‘if I deserve this censure it is proper that I should be exposed.’ Like most men living in the atmosphere of the Art, followers and attendants on armies, etc., etc., are always great talkers of what *should be*, and this is not always done without malignity. They stroll about the foot of Parnassus only to pull down by the legs those who are laboriously climbing its sides. Lewis may be sincere in what he tells Tinney; he would himself, no doubt, spoil the picture, and not being able to see so far as that,

John Constable, R.A.

wonders at what is now done, and concludes it cannot be made better, as he knows no better." Nat. Hone, here referred to, was a portrait-painter and died in 1784. In 1775 he exhibited a picture called "The Conjuror," which was intended deliberately to caricature Sir Joshua Reynolds. Lewis was doubtless Frederick Charles Lewis (1779-1856), an engraver and landscape-painter.

In October, 1823, Sir George and Lady Beaumont persuaded Constable to pay them a visit at Coleorton, and although he did not like being separated
Visits
Coleorton from his studio for so long a time, he looked forward to the visit, and to the prospect of a better acquaintance with all the treasures that the house contained; he was, moreover, particularly anxious to copy the little "Grove" by Claude Lorraine, which he thought would be a great help to him.

"Sir George," he writes, "was very full of [Edward] Irving, the Talker, when he left London: I hope he will not harp on that string still. I met Irving in the street a few weeks ago; his walk was a swing, he held a quarto book in his right hand, its back edging up between the deltoid and pectoral of the same side, and had I not known him I should have said there goes an insolent coxcomb; but I am told by several Scotchmen that he is not that."

At Coleorton

Constable was left to do entirely as he liked, to roam about the house, to copy the pictures, and to make sketches in the park. In fact, his visit was transformed into six weeks of such constant work, especially the copying indoors, that on his return to London his health broke down. He gives an interesting account of the hours which his host and hostess kept, and how the day was spent at Coleorton, and of Sir George Beaumont's kindness and hospitality, and of how magnificently he read Shakespeare's plays. Indeed, although they were often at variance in their artistic views, a very true and lasting friendship sprang up between them.

Constable's enthusiasm for Claude is unbounded : he can think of nothing else ; and it is remarkable testimony to his own individuality that, in spite of his great admiration for and no little copying of Claude's pictures, his own work is so free from the influence of the French master.

One would not have expected that all this Claude copying would have turned out "Waterloo Bridge" or "The Opening of the Lock." But Leslie in his own correspondence (edited by Tom Taylor) gives us the key to this when he writes :—"The most original landscape-painter I know" (meaning Constable) "says that when he sits down in the fields to make a sketch

*The
Beaumonts*

*Enthu-
siasm for
Claude*

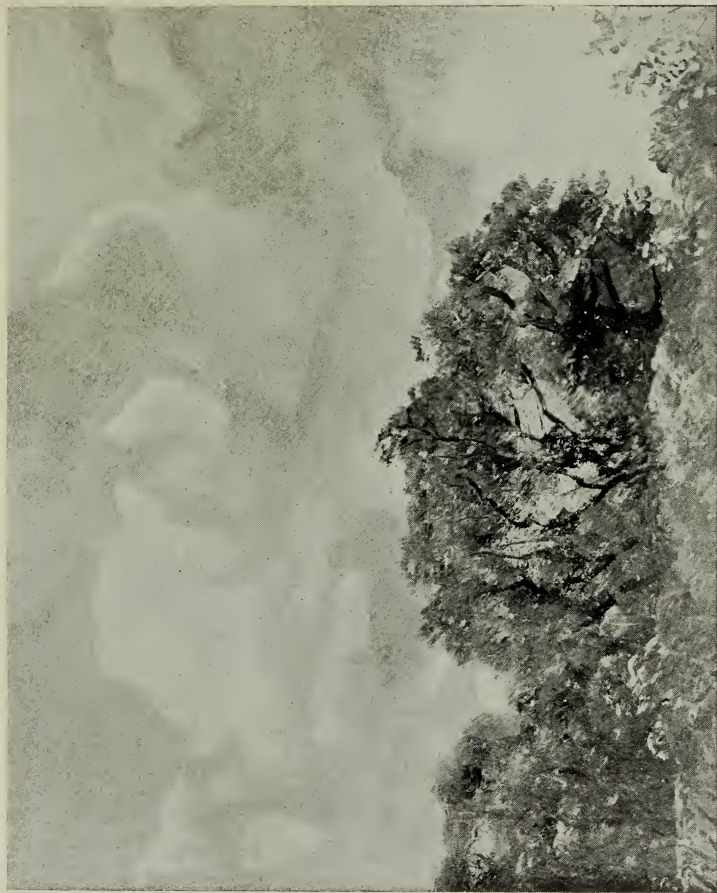
John Constable, R.A.

he endeavours to forget that he has ever seen a picture."

Constable's admiration for Claude continued to the end of his life, and might be thought exaggerated in these times. "The most perfect of all masters of real chiaroscuro," it was his deliberate conviction, "are Claude and Ostade."

As has been seen, Constable overworked himself at Coleorton, and on his return to London he was attacked by neuralgic pains in the bones of *Overwork* his head and face and teeth so severe that he had to "live on suction" for a fortnight. Sir George Beaumont wrote to condole with him in his illness, and protested that he must do him the justice to admit that he always recommended Constable to take riding or walking exercise when he was at Coleorton.

But he was incorrigible. Unless he were late for an appointment he never walked about the streets, but *Sturdy* only *strolled*, whatever the weather was like. His friendship for Thomas Stothard, R.A., in *Stothard* this respect was of great service to his health, for the latter prevailed upon Constable to accompany him sometimes in his long country walks. Stothard was more than twenty years older than Constable, but Leslie tells us that he was hardy, thrifty, and active,





A Country Walk

that he never got into a hackney coach in his life, and never wore a greatcoat, and relates Constable's account of a walk from London to Coombe Wood, which they took together, where they dined by the side of a spring:—

“They set out early in the day, provided with some sandwiches for their dinner. Before they reached the wood, Stothard, seeing Constable eating a sandwich, called him a ‘young traveller’ for breaking in on their store so early. When they got to the spring they found the water low and difficult to reach; but Constable took from his pocket a tin cup, which he had bought at Putney unnoticed by Stothard. The day was hot and the water intensely cold; and Stothard said, ‘Hold it in your mouth, sir, some time before you swallow it; a little brandy or rum now would be invaluable.’ ‘And you shall have some, sir, if you will retract what you said about my being a young traveller. I have brought a bottle of rum from town, a thing you never thought of’: for, though Constable carried their fare, Stothard was the caterer.”

Constable writes on December 18th, 1823:—“I am settled for the Exhibition. My ‘Waterloo’ must be done and one other, perhaps one of Tinney’s, ‘Dedham,’ but more probably my ‘Lock.’ I must visit Gillingham again for a subject

*A Country
Walk*

*Future
Plans*

John Constable, R.A.

for the other one next summer. . . . Mr. Angerstein's pictures will probably be national property, and, after 150 years' separation, you and I shall see the 'Narcissus' and the 'St. Ursula' become united again—a brother and sister, and after so long an absence from their parental roof on the Trinita di Monte."

This next letter in 1824 shows that "The Lock" was chosen in preference to "Dedham," but not finished in time for the Royal Academy:—"They are
"The Lock" overwhelmed with large pictures at the Academy. What will become of mine I know not, but I am told it looks very bright. My 'Lock' is now on my easel; it looks most beautifully silvery, windy and delicious; it is all health, in the absence of everything stagnant; it is wonderfully got together in only this one year. The print will be fine. The visit to Osmington I much look to; nothing shall readily occur to prevent it. I will give up Paris first."

In 1824 Constable sold two pictures to a Frenchman, "who," he tells us, "was after my large picture
Pictures for Paris of 'The Hay Cart' last year. He would, I believe, have both that and 'The Bridge' if he could get them at his own price."

This was agreed upon soon afterwards, £250 the pair, with a small picture of "Yarmouth" thrown in—not a very good price, but he thought that their

Pictures for Paris

exhibition in Paris would be advantageous to him. It seems that Mr. Arrowsmith would be more correctly described as an English dealer living in Paris, but as he calls the French his countrymen, he may have become naturalised. This sale to Arrowsmith in Paris was soon followed by another, probably to Schroth, as the following letter shows :—" I have counted on the pleasure of seeing Berkshire again with you, but that is not possible for me this year. I am more than ever involved in business. I have just now engaged to get seven pictures of a small size ready for Paris by August, two 20 × 30 inches, two 12" × 20", three 10" × 12", making in all an amount of about £130. My large pictures are packed off ; the same case contained three others which I had ready, £50 more. The large ones are to be exhibited at the Luxembourg, and my purchaser says they are immensely looked for at Paris. The Director of the Academy at Antwerp (Van Bree) has been here (from having seen my pictures in the Academy); he says they will make an impression on the Continent. . . . The National (not natural) Gallery is open at Mr. Angerstein's. This flux and influx of old pictures will bother the rising art, and will, in my opinion, suffocate and strangle all original feeling at its birth. . . . The world is rid

*Mr.
Arrowsmith*

*The
Death of
Byron*

John Constable, R.A.

of Lord Byron, but the deadly shame of his touch still remains. . . . The Lord have mercy on the woman! These poets seem nasty people, but I do not know one of them. Leslie's picture is the best in the Exhibition, but it has not secured him a single commission but a copy of it, except that it has doubly secured to him the patronage of that excellent nobleman, Lord Egremont. Glover's whole-lengths must be curious. Think of his ignorant presumption in attempting to paint a child. Ought he not to be made to stand in the pillory?"

CHAPTER IV.

HIGH-WATER MARK.

Exhibits in the Louvre, 1824—Famous in France—Invited to Paris—A French critic—"A miracle!"—Cotton-ball clouds—Cauliflower trees—Henry Phillips—French commissions—Schroth gives advice gratis—The post of honour at the Louvre—Awarded a gold medal by Louis XVIII., 1825—Head unturned—Exhibits at Lille, 1826—The French approval—Black and white—Sparkle—*En avant!*—Tub-maker patron—Paints a portrait at Woodmanstone—"The Leaping Horse," 1825—At Brighton—"Summer Afternoon after a Shower"—Rupture with Arrowsmith—Healing the breach—"The Cornfield," 1826—"The Glebe Farm"—Home again—A windfall, 1828—Various impressions—A bad passion—Causticism—Leslie's glasses—Judges at fault.

THERE were three¹ of Constable's pictures at the Louvre in 1824—"The Hay Wain," "A View near London," and a "Lock on the Stour." They evoked a variety of opinion, wrath predominating on one side, enthusiasm on the other. The critics of the old school were naturally out of their depth, and were angry at the

¹ Bryan's Dictionary gives "A View near London" as the third picture exhibited at the Salon in 1824, and not the small "Yarmouth" (p. 58). Arrowsmith certainly bought three pictures, but the references on pp. 68 and 69 suggest that only two were hung in the Salon.

John Constable, R.A.

artists for admiring them, but, among the younger men especially, they came as a revelation, opening out a vista of undreamt-of possibilities. The way, indeed, had been prepared in the year 1822 by the work of the English water-colour painters, headed by Bonington, and including Copley Fielding, Robson, and John Varley, but it is generally admitted by French writers and artists themselves that Constable really inspired the men who formed the now famous Barbizon school.

Without doubt his pictures created a stir. We have the contemporary evidence of Mr. William Brocheden, *Famous in France* who wrote in a letter to Constable: "The French have been forcibly struck by them, and they have created a division in the school of the landscape-painters in France. You are accused of carelessness by those who acknowledge the truth of your effect; and the freshness of your pictures has taught them that though your means may not be essential, your end must be to produce an imitation of nature, and the next Exhibition in Paris will teem with your imitators, or the school of Nature *versus* the school of Birmingham."

We have also the testimony of Mr. Arrowsmith, who kept the pictures until they were sent to the Louvre, where the French artists and critics first saw them. On June 19th, 1824, he writes from Paris:—

The Conquest of Paris

“I am certain you must have felt great anxiety from not receiving any news from me respecting the arrival of the pictures. My wish was to inform you at once what effect they had produced among the French artists. I can now, sir, assure you that no objects of art were ever more praised or gave more general satisfaction than your pictures, and it is with great impatience that I wait for the Exhibition of the Louvre to ensure you a most complete and deserved success; but you must yourself come over to receive the congratulations of my countrymen, and I shall then be happy to see you paid a just tribute for your admirable talent.”

Mr. Arrowsmith constantly presses him to pay a visit to Paris. He writes again in October of the same year:—“I wish I could tempt you with more than a friendly reception; but if that *Invited to Paris* can satisfy you, no person is more welcome than you, and I think the country will afford you things interesting enough to make up for your loss of time. . . . Be kind enough to inform Mrs. Constable that we should be extremely happy if she could make it convenient to undertake the journey with you in case you should come, or if not this season, at all times we shall feel honoured with her visit as well as yours. You must know there has been a room made ready for you since two months at least.”

John Constable, R.A.

Constable evidently thought of accepting this invitation, for Mr. Arrowsmith refers in March 1825 to his coming visit as assured, but not being able to conquer his repugnance to leaving England and his work, he seems never to have made up his mind to carry the plan into execution. The visit to France is alluded to by his sister on September 19th, 1825:—"Do you really think you shall ever go to France? I think that you would be made such a great man of that your name would be known through Paris, and so all over Europe. It might do you good by spreading your fame in foreign parts, but your works have done that already." But the visit never came off.

As an example of adverse criticism I quote one, sent "with Mr. Phillips's compliments to Mrs. Constable":—

*A French
Critic*

"*Two English Landscapes by Mr. Constable of London.*—Almost all artists have seen two English Landscapes lately sent to Paris, which, it is said, are to make a part of our next Exhibition at the Museum. We have therefore considered it no indiscretion to possess ourselves of this novelty to insert as an article, also to give on the above subject our sentiments. Painted in a style so different from that of our school, these two pictures, at first sight, produce an effect to which we are not accustomed.



"Salisbury Cathedral" (p. 50).

Foolish Enthusiasm

We soon become familiar with the manner of the Author's painting, and we experience the same pleasure as the greater number of artists in seeing the vigour and richness of tone which predominate in these Landscapes, where the colour is the first and perhaps the only quality which we meet with.

Seduced by this quality which they have found, already certain artists, light and changeable like a great many other Frenchmen, soon exclaimed, 'A miracle!' They have concluded that to do well they must imitate the English, because they understand colouring. This foolish enthusiasm, added to that which they have for their pretty *vignettes*, was all that was necessary to turn rapidly our young artists towards a style of convention, soft and loose, to which unfortunately they have already too great a propensity; a style which, if care be not taken, can only be considered as the impudence of a false imagination, and a violation of truth in every direction, nothing more than what is called *Van Loo*; in short, a style more dangerous because it is easier to be practised, since it frees the artist from all severe study. That explains why so many people cease to praise the excellence they cannot attain.

"Let us then examine with care these English paintings, the object of conversation amongst all the artists

John Constable, R.A.

and amateurs. We have said, and we repeat, the colour is strong and brilliant; that is a great deal without doubt, but that is not sufficient. Suppose for a moment the two pictures deprived of colour, but preserving faithfully the form of the objects, what remains? Nothing. In effect, in the trees we find not a single detail. Will it be said that the whole is in large? For it does not even offer the appearance of foliage. These clouds have motion, but they are all alike, and produce the effect of large balls of cotton rolling one over the other. These first

*Cotton-ball
Clouds*

fabrications, where the masters of all the schools, ancient and modern, would have certainly indicated something, only offer vague objects, without form, without contour, and timidly executed. Artists tell us, Is this what you admire? Then the noble, the celebrated Poussin is no more anything in your eyes; he did not even know the sublime art. His paintings, always beautiful, grouped with so much taste in the midst of

*Cauli-
flower
Trees*

large clumps of trees; his grounds so rich, where mountains predominate by their imposing aspect, all that is mere dotage! all that must yield before a wretched barrack simple in design, backed with enormous cauliflowers and brooms which you will call trees. What signifies

Henry Phillips

the drawing, the lines, the grandiose character! It must be colour, only colour, even though it express nothing. This, without almost any exaggeration, is the opinion of our little picture painters and of *croquis*, on the two English Landscapes that will be exhibited in our Louvre: real amateurs you shall judge."

The translation is so bad that in some places the meaning of the writer is obscure, but it describes the attitude of the old school of critics, of those who had been brought up on Salvator Rosa and Poussin, and could admire no landscape that had not the "grandiose character." Henry Phillips must have been the gentleman whose acquaintance Constable made at Brighton in 1824, with whom he soon became intimate, whom he called "a most intelligent and most elegant-minded man." Phillips

Henry
Phillips

was a schoolmaster, a botanist, a Fellow of the Horticultural Society, and a writer of books on Natural History, and died in 1831. Lucas says of him in a note that he had had the great misfortune to lose his sight. Constable once lent him £100, with little prospect of getting it back, and Mr. John James Masquerier, a portrait-painter, the very reverse in every respect of Phillips, called upon him in London to express sympathy on account of the loss of his money. "Never shall I

John Constable, R.A.

forget," writes Lucas, "the expression of manner and countenance with which he looked him in the face, saying, 'Well, Masquerier, I tell you what, I would sooner lose this sum by Phillips than gain it by you!'"

There was, as we have seen, another Frenchman besides Arrowsmith after Constable's pictures at this time—a dealer of the name of Schroth. We find him sending Constable a draft for £82, the price of three pictures, and writing on July 20th, 1824:—

*French
Commis-
sions*

"I hope very soon to receive the information which I have requested respecting the height and breadth of the pictures you are making for me, and I rely on receiving them before the 5th of August, wishing for your sake as well as mine to be enabled to exhibit them at the rooms; which cannot fail to increase the brilliant reputation you have acquired through the two large pictures in the possession of Mr. Arrowsmith."

Schroth was a very ardent admirer of Constable's work, and is always pressing him for more pictures, but even he cannot refrain from giving him some advice, and begging him to make his skies as simple and his landscape as finished as possible, because, as a rule, the Paris amateurs like something obvious and clearly defined; something of the feeling of Wynants, for instance, attracts their

*Advice
Gratis*

At the Louvre

admiration. Nevertheless, he urges him to look at his subject *en masse*, as in his (Schroth's) opinion Wynants is *un peu decoupe*.

Schroth's picture-dealing business unfortunately soon came to an end. He finds his prospects so bad that as an honourable man he must go into liquidation, and so in 1826 Constable lost a buyer who might have continued to be of much service to him.

In a letter to Fisher, Constable writes of his Paris success:—"Though the Director, Count Forbin, gave my pictures very respectable situations in the Louvre in the first instance, yet on being exhibited a few weeks they advanced in reputation, and were removed from their original situations to a post of honour,—two prime places in the principal room. I am much indebted to the artists for their alarum in my favour; but I must do justice to the Count, who is no artist I believe, and thought that as the colours are rough they should be seen at a distance. They found the mistake, and now acknowledge the richness of texture and attention to the surface of things. They are struck with their vivacity and freshness, things unknown to their own pictures."

Constable was awarded a gold medal for his pictures at the Louvre. He received a letter from Paris, dated March 4th, 1825:—

John Constable, R.A.

“MONSIEUR, — Je m’empresse de vous prévenir que, sur ma proposition, le Roi de France, mon auguste maître, a voulu vous donner une *Awarded a gold medal* preuve de la vive satisfaction que vos *by Louis XVIII.* ouvrages lui ont fait éprouver. Sa Majesté m’a chargé de vous transmettre une médaille d’or, qui vous sera remise par M. l’Ambassadeur de France près S.M.B.

“Cette faveur de mon Souverain vous prouvera sans doute combien il attache de prix à récompenser les talens de tous les pays, en leur donnant des marques éclatantes de son estime. J’ai été bien heureux, Monsieur, de m’être trouvé en position d’appeler sur vos excellens ouvrages l’attention de sa Majesté, et je vous prie d’agréer l’assurance de ma considération la plus distinguée.

“LE COMTE DE FORBIN.”

Afterwards Constable alludes with pride to the fact that when his name was announced to the whole body of artists as the recipient of a gold medal *Head* there was universal applause. *Unturned* Gratitude is not so common but that it is worth noticing, as a fine trait in his character, that when he mentions to Fisher this honour conferred upon him by the King of France, with pride and satisfaction, he

Gratitude to Fisher

adds, "But I can truly say that your early notice of me, and your friendship for me in my obscurity, was worth more, and is looked back to by me with more heart-felt satisfaction than this and all the other notice I have met with put together. 'Tis you that have so long held my head above water; although I have a good deal of the devil in me, still I think I should have been broken-hearted before this time but for you. I look continually back on the great kindness shown to me in my earlier days when it was truly of value to me, for I long floundered in the path, and tottered on the threshold, and there never was any young man nearer being lost than myself, but here I am, and I must now take heed where I stand."

The following year he sent the "White Horse" to Lille, and this picture was as much admired at Lille as the others had been in Paris. At the distribution of honours to the exhibitors at the close of the Exhibition, the Comte de Murat, Préfet of the Department, delivered an introductory speech in which he referred especially to the pictures of Lawrence and Constable:—

*Exhibits
at Lille*

"Parmi les qualités qui distinguent les Français, on a toujours vu dominer ce sentiment d'honneur qui fait de la justice un besoin et de la générosité un plaisir. Aussi parmi nous n'est-il jamais à craindre que les

John Constable, R.A.

talens étrangers soient rabaissés ou méconnus. Pour la première fois, des tableaux Anglais ont paru dans nos salons. Un éclatant hommage a aussitôt accueilli les portraits de Lawrence et les paysages de Constable. La manière de se dernier, neuve et hardie, offre de grandes beautés, excelle dans quelques parties et peut faire marcher l'art dans une route nouvelle. Toutefois elle n'a pas été entièrement exempte de critique, et pourrait n'être pas sans danger pour de présomptueux imitateurs. . . ." Constable and Lawrence both received gold medals at Lille out of a total of eight recipients of this distinction.

The
French
Approval

be with so small a circle of admirers in his own country, and his letters at this time seem to be written in rather a brighter and more hopeful vein. "I have added," he says, "to the respectability of my family by making the family name a mark of distinction, and above all by being respectable myself and forming friendships with my superiors; not that any of these circumstances will make any difference in my habits. I know the difficulty of gaining reputation in the first instance, and I am daily more sensible of the still greater difficulty of maintaining it.



"A Summer Afternoon after a Shower" (p. 77).

Growing in Reputation

“My reputation at home among my brother artists is gaining ground, and I daily feel the honour of having found an original style, and independent of him who would be Lord over all—I mean Turner. I believe it would be difficult to say that there is a bit of Landscape now done that does not emanate from that source.

“Reynolds has got off a proof of my ‘Lock’; it looks most promising. The size is 13×15 in. (the part engraved). As you say, they cannot engrave my colour and evanescence, but they can the chiaroscuro, and the details, and the taste, and with it most of my sentiment.

*Black
and
White*

A bad engraver will not injure me to that extent you may think. But it is, as you say, quite impossible to engrave the real essence of my landscape feeling.”

Constable was at Brighton at the end of May working at several pictures which he had promised to get ready for Paris by August. “One of the largest,” he writes, “is quite complete, and my best with sparkle and repose, which is my struggle just now.” His execution apparently annoys the scholastic Academicians, and he owns that “perhaps the sacrifices I make for lightness and brightness are too great, but these things are the essence of landscape, and any extreme is better than white lead and oil, and dado painting.” Not even the copying of Sir George Beau-

Sparkle

John Constable, R.A.

mont's Claudes can turn him from his affection for the sparkle of midday sunlight.

We have gone a step farther since 1825. "White lead and oil and dado painting" had no merit in the easel pictures such as were in his mind; but *En avant!* what would he have said if he could have foreseen the triumph of the opposite theory as applied to mural decoration? Where, for instance, would he have placed the noble designs and the broad and flat execution of Puvis de Chavannes, who has turned canvas and oil to the same use in France as fresco in Italy? Assuredly he would have placed his work far above the huge mural paintings of the early half of the nineteenth century.

We must admire Constable for his resolute refusal to pander to popular taste. He always aimed at his own ideal of perfection, and set his work before the public for them to take it or leave it as they liked.

Tub-maker Patron One hardly knows whether the tub-maker of Tottenham Court Road meant it as a compliment or not when he asked him for a damaged picture which he could let him have cheap to decorate the wall of his room with! It is satisfactory, at least, to find him able to fix a limit of twenty guineas, low as it is, below which sum he will accept no commission.

“The Leaping Horse”

Early in 1825 he is at the small village of Woodmanstone, a few miles south-east of Croydon, painting a portrait group of three children with a donkey for Mr. Lambert; but his heart is not in it while a large half-finished canvas stands upon his easel in London, and only a feeling that he must not “kick down the ladder” keeps him there to the neglect of his landscape. This latter picture he calls a canal scene, full of life and incident. It was one of the three pictures exhibited in the 1825 Academy, and it is now in the Diploma Gallery, Burlington House, under the name of “The Leaping Horse,” and a very fine full-sized sketch of the same subject is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington.

*Paints a
Portrait
at Wood-
manstone*

*“The
Leaping
Horse”*

With reference to this picture, Leslie explains that barriers without gates were placed across the towing-path on the river Stour as a continuation of the fences to keep the cattle from straying. The horses were kept in particularly good condition, and taught to leap the barriers, but Leslie’s explanation that Constable actually saw the crimson fringe of the harness trappings is a mistake; for, on one occasion, when painting from nature, his father’s barge-man came up to overlook his young master, John, and found fault

John Constable, R.A.

with these gay trappings on the ground that they were never worn, until Constable explained to him that his object in so doing was that he might have the opportunity of introducing the bright red colour of the fringe as a contrast to the greens.

He worked very hard on this picture, and parted with it for the Royal Academy with more anxiety than he had ever before experienced, because he felt that he should have had it for a few more weeks upon his easel. "My picture," he writes a few days afterwards, "is liked at the Academy; indeed, it forms a decided feature, and its light cannot be put out, because it is the light of Nature—the mother of all that is valuable in poetry, painting, or anything else where an appeal to the soul is required. The language of the heart is the only one that is universal, and Sterne says that he disregards all rules but makes his way to the heart as he can. I sold this picture, 'The Lock,' on the day of the opening for one hundred and fifty guineas, including the frame."

The year 1825 brought him some anxiety on account of the delicate health of his eldest son, and for this reason his wife and children went to
At Brighton. It must have suited the boy, as
Brighton he soon afterwards was sent to school there under Mr. Phillips. It was on one of these journeys to

At Brighton

Brighton that Constable got down from the coach and made the beautiful sketch known as “Summer Afternoon after a Shower,” the recollection of an effect he had noticed at Redhill. John Jackson, R.A., was so much delighted with this sketch that he offered to paint a picture any size in return for it, but Constable declined to part with it.

*“Summer
Afternoon
after a
Shower”*

Fortunately, more numerous commissions kept him hard at work at his easel, which he finds a cure for all ills, and in October he gets to work on a large “Waterloo Bridge,” what he calls “the real canvas.” “Like a blister, it begins to stick closer and closer and to disturb my nights, but I am in a state that knows no flinching; ‘go on’ is the only thing heard, ‘aut Cæsar aut nullus.’” In spite, however, of these orders, Constable complains to Fisher that his finances are sadly deranged; to be accounted for, perhaps, by the move to Brighton and the illness of his son, and these sordid but necessary considerations compel him to abandon, to some extent, large pictures for the small and more profitable sizes. The immediate cause of financial embarrassment was an unfortunate quarrel with Arrowsmith, who had given him orders, on which something had been paid in advance. Not only did he throw over this engage-

John Constable, R.A.

ment and lose the money upon which he had been counting, but he had, in addition, to refund the amount he had already received. This rupture in their friendly relations was apparently owing to Arrowsmith's bad manners, but Constable must tell the story in his own words :—

“I had, by dint of pains and conduct and my brother's friendship, nearly laid in a sufficiency at my banker's to keep my mind easy on that score during the progress [of “Waterloo Bridge”], when my French friend, Arrowsmith, came here from Paris, and a most friendly meeting ensued, he finding his order of two landscapes completed and to his entire satisfaction. He advanced £40 for works already ordered, and gave new orders to the amount of about £200. . . . At his last visit with a French friend, an amateur, he was so exceedingly impertinent and used such language as never was used to me at my easel before, that I startled them by my manner of showing I felt the indignity. He apologised, but I could not receive it, and he left my house telling Johnny that he would gladly have given £100 rather than, etc., and I sent him a letter withdrawing all my engagements with him, and enclosing him a draft for the balance (£40) on my banker.”

The Soft Answer

In justice to Arrowsmith, it must be said that he endeavoured to make such reparation as was possible for his rudeness. In reply to Constable's last letter, he writes :—

“MY DEAR SIR,—I should have thought that the explanation we had yesterday relating to the little circumstance alluded to in your letter would have been quite satisfactory to both parties ; it is so on my side ; but you appear to have taken it more to heart and to resent it so far as to refuse painting the pictures for which we had agreed. This, my dear sir, you are entirely master of. I alone shall be the sufferer, and therefore will not entreat you to proceed with a thing you seem so unwilling to do.”

*Healing
the
Breach*

This “mild and gentlemanly” letter appeased Constable's wrath :—“I have now,” he continues, “written to him at Paris to say that as we were now on an equal footing, I was most ready to forget all and to resume our friendship, assuring him that resentment formed no part of my character, and leaving it to himself as to any further orders about pictures. Thus, like Marshal Tallard, I have lost everything but honour.”

He is evidently fearful of a scolding from his friend Fisher for this display of temper, and goes on : “I

John Constable, R.A.

am so sound, body and mind, wind and limb, that I am manfully combating the Devil and all his allies. When your severe comments are made on my impetuosity above, pray be so kind, for (just, as well) you always are, to bear in mind that I have a high character to support in Paris. Arrowsmith has sold my 'Wain' for £400, and Schroth has been offered £100 for one of his smaller ones. Arrowsmith has a room in his house called 'Mr. Constable's room.' I shall contribute no more to its furniture. He says my Landscapes have made an epoch there."

Thus ends the Arrowsmith incident, and one cannot but think that had he been a little less hasty, his honour might have been satisfied without the loss of so valuable a client, as he himself admitted afterwards, for he explained to Fisher that he had just received a disagreeable letter from Tinney, which was lying on the table with his brushes when Arrowsmith, called. His ill temper exploded on Arrowsmith, and ultimately scorched himself.

The "Waterloo Bridge" had to be put on one side, but "The Cornfield" soon takes its place, and in April, 1826, he writes that he "has despatched a
" *The* large landscape to the Academy, upright, of
Cornfield" the size of the 'Lock,' but a subject of a
very different nature: inland cornfields, a close lane



"The Cornfield" (p. 81).

“The Cornfield”

forming the foreground ; it is not neglected in any part ; the trees are more than usually studied, the extremities well defined, as well as the stems ; they are shaken by a pleasant and healthful breeze at noon. I do hope to sell this picture, as it has certainly got a little more eye-salve than I usually condescend to give them.” In this description we can easily recognise the picture in the National Gallery, London. When it was at Somerset House, previous to the opening of the Exhibition, Chantrey came up and noticing the dark shadows under the tails of the sheep, suddenly said, “Why, Constable, all your sheep have got the rot. Give me the palette ; I must cure them.” His efforts only making things worse, he threw the palette at Constable and ran off.

Another notable picture in the National Gallery dates from about this time ; towards the end of the year he writes, “My last landscape is a cottage scene with the church of Langham, the poor Bishop’s first living ; it is one of my best in colour, fresh and bright, and I have pacified it into tone and solemnity.”

This scene of Langham Church was, as
Leslie tells us, a pet subject with Constable,
of which he left several pictures and
sketches, the most important being “The Glebe Farm.”
And what a beautiful example of this period of

“*The
Glebe
Farm*”

John Constable, R.A.

Constable's art it is; broad and harmonious in tone; of great depth and coolness; with a flicker of light running over it which in no way disturbs its repose. It marks the high point at which he had arrived in pure brush work, before the palette knife was so aggressively used in the striving after brilliancy which, as he grew older, sometimes gave his work an unpleasant spottiness. This picture was exhibited in 1827, together with the "Marine Parade and Chain Pier at Brighton," "A Water Mill at Gillingham," and one of the numerous "Hampstead Heaths."

In Hampstead, after the wanderings occasioned by the illness of his son, he finally settles down, and in
Home a letter to Fisher, dated August 1827, de-
Again scribes his delight and satisfaction at being
once more at home, looking on a view unsurpassed in Europe, from Westminster Abbey to Gravesend. For about a year he enjoyed the happiness and repose of home life in Well Walk, painting steadily, and, what is more, producing work which satisfied him. A large upright picture of Dedham Vale—"perhaps my best," he says—was sent to the Royal Academy of 1828, and a legacy of something like £20,000 from Mr. Bicknell relieved him of his money troubles, enabling him, to use his own expression, "to stand before a six-foot canvas with

Views of his Character

a mind at ease, thank God!" He might have been more grateful to his father-in-law for this windfall, for he seems to have forgotten what he said about him in his letter of September 9th, 1826. Then he wrote that Mr. Bicknell had had a serious attack of apoplexy and was not expected to recover, that his affairs were in disorder, and he was worth little or nothing, because as soon as he had any money the great folk came and borrowed it on little or no security, and only invited him to dinner by way of repayment, knowing his fondness for good living, etc. For these hard sayings surely some contrition might well have been expressed.

*A
Windfall*

Hitherto his life had been, on the whole, a happy one; not by any means free from the ordinary cares and anxieties incidental to the pursuit of an ill-paid profession; clouded, moreover, by that want of success and of public appreciation so bitter to a sensitive nature conscious of the power within it. Some of those who met him in society seemed particularly struck by this. Mr. Frith, for instance, in his *Reminiscences*, speaks of him as an embittered and disappointed man. But, judging from his letters, this was not the dominant note, and though such feelings may have veiled the light, they did not obscure it altogether. There is much in his letters that

*Various
Impres-
sions*

John Constable, R.A.

denotes the joy of life, devotion to his work, love of his family and his home life, and but little that has the flavour of bitterness. Therefore if Mr. Frith's impression was right, that the artist could not be called genial—and he mentions having, as a young man, sat at dinner between Eastlake and Constable, when the latter never spoke a word to him all through the meal—it may be taken for granted that the best side of his character was less conspicuous in society than in his own home. But Mr. Frith knew him only in the last years of his life. No doubt, after his wife's death, and in failing health, these peculiarities became accentuated.

In *The Memoirs of C. R. Leslie* a story is told of a noisy amateur who made a fuss in the hall of the Royal Academy because his picture was not well hung. “Constable and I went down to pacify him. He accused several of the members of jealousy, and said, ‘I cannot but feel as I do, for painting is a passion with me.’ ‘Yes,’ said Constable, ‘and a *bad* passion.’”

Constable had no mercy on amateurs who posed as artists. “I am sick of amateurs,” he wrote *Causticism* in his journal; “they are the greatest enemies that living art has. Mr. Prior sent a person to me calling himself an artist—the most

Conscientious and Sincere

deplorable thing I ever saw—probably some Methodist parson. He could not do anything. What he showed me would disgrace a schoolgirl of eleven years old; he might have spared himself the trouble of telling me that he had never had the least instruction in the world.”

Of a second-rate portrait-painter, whose commonplace work had acquired some popularity, he said that when he painted a head “he took out all the bones and all the brains.”

Leslie’s admiration and affection for Constable were so profound that he is inclined to round off all the edges and corners of his friend’s character, and to colour it with the rosy tint of his personal regard; so that if we want the plain truth we must listen also to all that others have to say about him and form our own conclusions.

*Leslie’s
Glasses*

Richard Redgrave, in his *Memoirs*, writes :—“Leslie has just completed his life of Constable, and the world will know Constable only through Leslie’s agreeable life of him. There he appears all amiability and goodness, and one cannot recognise the bland yet intense sarcasm of his nature ; soft and amiable in speech, he yet uttered sarcasms which cut you to the bone.” But he was conscientious, and valued no appreciation that was not genuine. To this Mr. Redgrave bears witness. He

John Constable, R.A.

describes a memorable incident:—"It is well known that one year, when Constable was on the Council of the Royal Academy, one of his own pictures was by mistake passed before the judges.

*Judges at
Fault*

'Cross it,' said one; 'It won't do,' said another; 'Pass on,' said a third; and the carpenter was just about to chalk it with a cross when he read the name of 'John Constable.' Of course there were lame apologies, and the picture was taken from the condemned heap, and placed with the works of his brother Academicians. But after work was over Constable took the picture under his arm, and, despite the remonstrances of his colleagues, marched off with it. 'I can't think,' said he, 'of its being hung after it has been fairly turned out.' The work so condemned was the 'Stream bordered with Willows,' now in the South Kensington Museum under the title 'Water Meadows near Salisbury.' Of this picture Leslie once said to me that he would give any work he (Leslie) had painted for it, so warmly did he admire it."

CHAPTER V.

THE LUCAS MEZZOTINTS.

Death of his wife, 1828—Elected R.A., 1829—Ungracious colleagues—
Preparing the *English Landscape* engravings—The Sootbag—
Pains taken—First title-page, 1830—Fore words—Prospectus—
Ingenious effrontery—Author's anxiety—Descriptive letterpress—
Dedham Church—The wooden-headed public—The first plate—
“On the Orwell.”

AT this period came the great break in Constable's life; the severance of ties which takes the heart out of man and marks the hill-top from which he sees before him no higher peaks to conquer, but only a gentle descent into the valley of the shadow of death.

John Constable had been married just twelve years when this happiest period of his life was brought to a close by the death of his wife in the autumn of 1828. It was probably soon after the birth of his youngest child that the seeds of her illness were laid, at any rate it is not until the summer of this year that he seemed anxious about her; it was rather for the infant boy and his common ailments that his fears were aroused.

*Death of
his Wife*

John Constable, R.A.

Mrs. Constable developed pulmonary consumption, the growth of which disease neither the air of Brighton, where he had at first taken her, nor of Hampstead could arrest, and she died at the latter place on November 23rd, 1828. This great grief tinged the remainder of his life with sadness, and dealt him a blow from which he never really recovered. Avoiding rather than courting society, undemonstrative, reserved, and scrupulous as to those whom he admitted to closest intimacy, his was the kind of nature upon which such a loss would tell most heavily.

In less than three months after this sad event Constable was elected an Academician, and though he was gratified and pleased at his promotion, his pleasure was clouded by an intense regret that the honour came too late for him to share it with his wife. He received visits of congratulation from several R.A.'s, amongst whom he mentions Turner and Jones, but on paying the usual call upon the President, Sir Thomas Lawrence, he found how far from converted to his art were the artists of the old school. Lawrence used to talk of his paintings as "ferocious" art, and he made it plain that in his opinion Constable was a lucky man to have been preferred before the "historical painters of great merit on the list of candidates."



"Stream bordered with Willows" (p. 88).

Design of the Mezzotints

This was hardly to be called a graceful mode of welcoming a new colleague, and Constable felt the sting of this reception so much that he wrote to Fisher doubting whether to send his new picture of "Hadleigh Castle" to the Exhibition, so nervous was he as to its reception. He adds, "I am still smarting under my election." So that even Academical honours were not without their bitterness. Wilkie, on the other hand, told Leslie after returning from abroad, that he could not understand how it was that the painter of such magnificent works as those in the Louvre had not been long ago an Academician.

*Un-
gracious
Colleagues*

Within a year of Constable's election as an Academician, Sir Thomas Lawrence died, and was succeeded by Martin Archer Shee as President.

At this time Constable undertook the great work of preparing for publication the series of mezzotint engravings executed by David Lucas from his pictures and drawings, entitled *Various Subjects of Landscape characteristic of English Scenery*. He threw himself into the project with enthusiasm and energy, determined to produce a volume which would rank amongst the greatest achievements in black and white, and which would at the same time appeal

*Preparing
the
"English
Land-
scape"
engravings*

John Constable, R.A.

to a wider public than his pictures. Constable knew well enough that the originality of his work, in its frank portraiture of Nature, was the chief stumbling-block to popular appreciation, and he took infinite pains to explain his intention to the public that he desired to direct their attention to the "Chiaroscuro of Nature," lest they should misunderstand him.

Mr. Holmes, in his *Constable* (1901), says that he bestowed the greatest care upon the selection of subjects, supervising the preparation of the plates, and "the outcome was the most magnificent series of landscape mezzotints ever produced. Even Turner's *Liber Studiorum*, with its amazing delicacy, variety, and accomplishment, does not move one so profoundly."

Every one may not subscribe to this measure of praise. Constable himself, in writing to Lucas, tells him to "beware of the sootbag," and the solid blackness of some of these mezzotints justifies the caution. Thus the *Spectator* writes in 1831:—

"We have before us the two first numbers of a series of mezzotint engravings by David Lucas from pictures by Mr. Constable of landscapes characteristic of English scenery. They have two great and prevailing faults, extreme blackness and coarseness; their rough execution we do not so much object to, as it

Preliminary Trouble

appears to imitate the style of painting of the originals; but the shadows are sooty." The engravings vary greatly in this respect. "Spring," "Yarmouth," "A Lock on the Stour," "Noon," "A Sea Beach," are beautiful examples; on the other hand, "The Glebe Farm," "A Heath," "Hadleigh Castle," and "Weymouth Bay" are so black that the half-tones are lost, and the effect is "as if all the chimney-sweepers in Christendom had been at work on them."

The care, amounting almost to feverishness, which both Constable and David Lucas took in preparing *English Landscape* for publication is fully proved in their correspondence, and in the number of different title-pages and proof-pages of letterpress, finally discarded, which can be traced. These are of such interest that I make no apology for giving some account of them in the order in which they saw the light.

The original paper wrappers for the subscribers' proofs—pink for the India proofs selling at ten guineas, grey for the plain-paper proofs selling at five guineas—had only *English Landscape by John Constable, R.A.*, printed upon them. The title-page for the first edition of the complete set, originally intended to have been published in 1830, afterwards postponed until 1833, was as follows:—

John Constable, R.A.

VARIOUS SUBJECTS OF
LANDSCAPE,
CHARACTERISTIC OF ENGLISH SCENERY,
FROM PICTURES PAINTED

BY
JOHN CONSTABLE, R.A.
ENGRAVED

BY
DAVID LUCAS.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY MR. CONSTABLE, 35 CHARLOTTE STREET,
FITZROY SQUARE.

SOLD BY COLNAGHI, DOMINIC COLNAGHI & CO.,
PALL MALL EAST.

1830.

Fore words The following introduction to the first
edition bears the date of May 1832:—

“INTRODUCTION.

“Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri,
Quo me cunque rapit tempestas, deferor hospes.’

—HORACE, *Ep.* I.

“THE present collection of Prints of English Land-
scape, after much pains and considerable expense

Introduction

bestowed upon it, is at length completed, and is offered to the notice of the Public; not without anxiety as to the kind of reception it may meet with. The very favourable opinion, however, passed upon it while in progress, by professional and other intelligent friends, at the same time as it has encouraged its publication, has also served to lessen that anxiety in no small degree.

“The subjects of all the plates are from real scenes, and the effects of light and shadow are merely transcripts of what happened at the time they were taken.

“The object in view in their production has been to display the Phenomena of the Chiar’oscuro of Nature, to mark some of its endless beauties and varieties, to point out its vast influence upon Landscape, and to show its use and power as a medium of expression.

“In Art as in Literature there are two modes by which men aim at distinction; in the one the Artist by careful application to what others have accomplished, imitates their works, or selects and combines their various beauties; in the other he seeks excellence at its primitive source—Nature. The one forms a style upon the study of pictures, and produces either imitative or eclectic art, as it has been termed; the

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other, by a close observation of Nature, discovers qualities existing in her, which have never been portrayed before, and thus forms a style which is original. The results of the one mode, as they repeat that with which the eye is already familiar, are soon recognized and estimated; the advances of the Artist in a new path must necessarily be slow, for few are able to judge of that which deviates from the usual course or qualified to appreciate original studies.

“The Author, if he could venture to do so, would willingly entertain a hope that the present little Work might contribute in some degree to promote the love and consequent study of the Scenery of our own Country ; abounding as it does in Grandeur and every description of Pastoral Beauty, and endeared to us by associations of the most powerful kind.

“35 CHARLOTTE STREET, FITZROY SQUARE,
May 28th, 1832.”

Next comes a proof-copy of a descriptive circular
Pros- which was intended to prepare the way for
pectus the complete edition of the first series. It
is seldom that a publishing venture is
explained in such adequate terms, and, in this respect,
the prospectus may be regarded as a model one :—

Descriptive Prospectus

ENGLISH LANDSCAPE.

VARIOUS SUBJECTS

OF

LANDSCAPE,

PRINCIPALLY INTENDED TO MARK

THE PHENOMENA OF THE CHIAR'OSCURO OF NATURE,

BY

JOHN CONSTABLE, ESQ., R.A.

*"Multa vident Pictores in imminencia et in umbris quæ
nos non videmus."*—CICERO.

"The present work consists of a collection of Prints of Rural Landscape, all of them engraved by Mr. David Lucas, from the Pictures of Mr. Constable, most of which have been exhibited at the Royal Academy within the last few years; and being now completed, is most respectfully offered to the notice of the Admirers of Art.

"The Author rests in the belief that this work may not be found wholly unworthy of attention. It originated in no mercenary views, but merely as a pleasing professional occupation, and was pursued with the hope of imparting pleasure and instruction to others. He had imagined to himself an object in art,

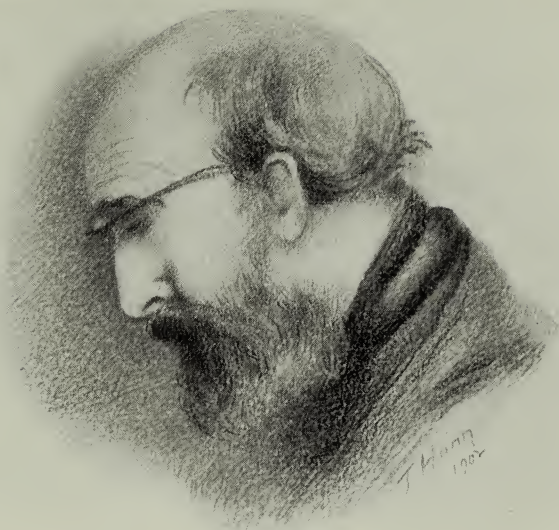
John Constable, R.A.

and has always pursued it. Much of the Landscape forming the subject of these Plates going far to embody his ideas (owing perhaps to the rich and feeling manner in which they are engraved), he has been tempted to publish them, and offers them as the result of his own experience, founded, as he conceives it to be, in a just observation of natural scenery in its various aspects.

‘Soul-soothing Art ! whom morning, noon-tide, even,
Do serve with all their fitful pageantry.’

“It is the desire of the Author in this publication to increase the interest for, and promote the study of, the Rural Scenery of England, with all its endearing associations, its amenities, and even in its most simple localities ; England with her climate of more than vernal freshness, in whose summer skies ‘of thousand liveries dight,’ and rich autumnal clouds, the observer of Nature may daily watch her endless varieties of effect.

“But, perhaps, it is in its professional character that this work may be most considered, so far as it regards true Art ; its aim being to direct attention to the source of one of its most efficient principles, ‘The Chiar’oscuro of Nature,’ to meet the influence of Light



David Lucas (p. 89).

Descriptive Prospectus

and Shadow upon Landscape, not only in its general impression and as a means of rendering a proper emphasis on the parts, but also to show its use and power as a medium of expression, so as to note 'the day, the hour, the sunshine, and the shade.' In some of these subjects an attempt has been made to arrest the more abrupt and transient appearances of the Chiar'oscuro of Nature; to show its effect in the most striking manner; to give 'to one brief moment caught from fleeting time' a lasting and sober existence; and to render permanent many of these splendid but evanescent Exhibitions which are ever occurring in the endless varieties of Nature in her external changes.

'Still must my partial pencil love to dwell
On the home prospect of my hermit cell;
Still must it trace (the fleeting tints forgive)
Each fleeting charm that bids the Landscape live.'

"The subjects of all the Plates are taken from real places, and are meant particularly to characterize the scenery of England; in their selection a partiality has perhaps been given to those of a particular neighbourhood. Some of them may be more generally interesting, as the scenes of many of the marked historical events of our Middle Ages.

"The Author, if he may venture to do so, enter-

John Constable, R.A.

tains a hope that this work, founded on principles so legitimate, will not only find its place in the portfolio of the Artist, and be an acquisition to the Amateur; but from the almost universal esteem in which the Arts are now held, he trusts that it may prove generally acceptable.

“35 CHARLOTTE STREET, FITZROY SQUARE,
January 1833.”

This is what he calls the Prospectus in a letter to Boner, dated April 22, 1833, in which the wording of it is discussed at length :—“ I am in a great *Ingenious Effrontery* funk about all this display, but I send you the whole of my *ingenious effrontery*. The word *powerful*,” he goes on, “ should be used by others if we deserve it ; it is the most complimentary expression we have to one another in the profession. It is also technical, and few, very few, have it. But *power* without *manner* is the height of everything ; that is still more rare ; fewer and fewer have that. Power is a high and great word, as much and more than ‘ *oneness* ’ in poetry.” One cannot restrain the remark that in these latter days this habit of nicely considering phraseology is conspicuously absent from too many prospectuses—not of projected publications solely. At all events, Constable possessed an infinite capacity for taking pains.

A Variety of Introductions

The title-page was slightly altered in 1833, and made to read thus :—

VARIOUS SUBJECTS OF
LANDSCAPE,
CHARACTERISTIC OF ENGLISH SCENERY,
PRINCIPALLY INTENDED TO MARK
THE PHENOMENA OF THE CHIAR'OSCURO OF NATURE :
FROM PICTURES PAINTED BY
JOHN CONSTABLE, R.A.
ENGRAVED BY
DAVID LUCAS.
LONDON :
PUBLISHED BY MR. CONSTABLE, 35 CHARLOTTE STREET,
FITZROY SQUARE.
SOLD BY COLNAGHI, DOMINIC COLNAGHI & Co.,
PALL MALL EAST.

1833.

There are proof-copies of no fewer than six introductions, dated January 1833, in all of which there is some variation either in the wording of the paragraphs or in the poetical quotations with which they are ornamented, and all differing in some degree from the one finally published in May 1833, but in substance they are taken from

*Author's
Anxiety*

John Constable, R.A.

the descriptive circular already quoted. The introduction No. 3 of January ends with the following paragraph:—

“In Art as in Literature there are two modes by which men endeavour to attain the same end, and seek distinction. In the one the Artist, intent only on the study of departed excellence, or on what others have accomplished, becomes an imitator of their works, or he selects and combines their various beauties; in the other he seeks perfection at its Primitive Source, Nature. The one forms a style upon the study of pictures, or the art alone; and produces either ‘imitative,’ ‘scholastic,’ or that which has been termed ‘Eclectic Art.’ The other, by study equally legitimately founded in art, but further pursued in such a far more expansive field, soon finds for himself innumerable sources of study, hitherto unexplored, fertile in beauty, and by attempting to display them for the first time, forms a style which is original; thus adding to the Art qualifications of Nature unknown to it before. The results of the one mode, as they merely repeat what has been done by others, and by having the appearance of that with which the eye is already familiar, can be easily comprehended, soon estimated, and are at once received. Thus the rise of an Artist in a sphere of his own must almost certainly be delayed; it is to Time

Brief Essays

generally that the justness of his claims to a lasting reputation will be left ; so few appreciate any deviation from a beaten track, can trace the indications of Talent in immaturity, or are qualified to judge of productions bearing an original cast of mind, of genuine study, and of consequent novelty of style in their mode of execution.

“35 CHARLOTTE STREET, FITZROY SQUARE,
January 1833.”

It was Constable's original intention to have written a page of descriptive letterpress to accompany each engraving. These were written for the *Descriptive Frontispiece*:—(1) Home and Grounds of the late Golding Constable, Esq.: East Bergholt, Suffolk. (2) Stoke by Neyland, Suffolk. (3) A Sea Beach, Brighton. (4) Old Sarum. (5) Spring. (6) Summer Morning. The copies shown to me of the two last are, I believe, the only ones in existence, and I therefore select them as examples. The proof of “Summer Morning,” it may be added, is corrected in pencil in Constable's own handwriting. If these little essays are quaint, they are also marked by the common-sense of a first-hand observer of Nature. This is what the artist has to tell us of the Spring-time:—

John Constable, R.A.

“ SPRING.

“ Here the breath

Of life informing each organic frame ;
Hence the green earth, and wild resounding waves ;
Hence light and shade alternate, warmth and cold,
And bright and dewy clouds, and vernal show'rs,
And all the fair variety of things.

“ This Plate may perhaps give some idea of one of those bright and animated days of the early year, when all Nature bears so exhilarating an aspect ; when at noon large garish clouds, surcharged with hail or sleet, sweep with their broad cool shadows the fields, woods, and hills ; and by the contrast of their depths and bloom enhance the value of the vivid greens and yellows so peculiar to this season ; heightening also their brightness, and by their motion causing that playful change, always so much desired by the painter.

“ The natural history—if the expression may be used—of the skies above alluded to, which are so particularly washed in the hail-squalls at this time of the year, is this :—The clouds accumulate in very large and dense masses, and from their loftiness seem to move but slowly ; immediately upon these large clouds appear numerous opaque patches, which, however, are only small clouds passing rapidly before them, and consist-

“Spring”

ing of isolated pieces, detached probably from the larger clouds. These floating much nearer the earth, may perhaps fall in with a stronger current of wind, which, as well as their comparative lightness, causes them to move with greater rapidity ; hence they are called by wind-millers and sailors ‘messengers,’ being always the forerunners of bad weather. They float about midway in what may be termed the *lanes* of the clouds ; and from being so situated are almost uniformly in shadow, receiving only a reflected light from the clear blue sky immediately above, and which descends perpendicularly upon them into these *lanes*. In passing over the bright parts of the large clouds, they appear as ‘darks,’ but in passing the shadowed parts they assume a gray, a pale, or lurid hue.

‘Fair-handed Spring unbosoms every grace.’

The Autumn only is called the painter’s season, from the great richness of the colours of the *dead* and decaying foliage, and the peculiar tone and beauty of the skies ; but the Spring has perhaps more than an equal claim to his notice and admiration, and from causes not wholly dissimilar—the great variety of tints and colours of the *living* foliage, besides having the flowers and blossoms. The beautiful and tender hues of the young leaves and buds are rendered more lovely by being

John Constable, R.A.

contrasted, as they now are, with the sober russet browns of the trees and hedges from which they shoot, and which still show the drear remains of the season that is past. The tender beauties which wait upon this flowery season are but too often premature; the early blights and 'killing frosts' which usually attend it have caused the fickleness of Spring to be proverbial, even with the poets, who feelingly allude to it—'Abortive as the first-born bloom of spring.' Their genius, however, has made it a source of the most beautiful and touching imagery—

'Hoary-headed frosts

Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose;
And on old Hyems' chin and icy crown
An od'rous chaplet of sweet summer buds
Is as in mockery set.'

The ploughman 'leaning o'er the shining share,' the sower 'stalking with measured step the neighbouring fields,' are conspicuous objects in the vernal Landscape; and last, though not least in interest, the birds, 'by the great Father of the Spring inspired,' who with their songs again cheer the labourer at his work, and complete the joyous animation of the new season."

One can scarcely suppress a smile to think that there once was a time, not so very remote, when a series



"Salisbury from the Meadows" (p. 111).

“Summer Morning”

of Plates after Constable, produced under his own supervision, was supposed to need the accompaniment of text of any kind whatsoever. Here are the reflections to which a Summer Morning gives rise:—

“SUMMER MORNING.

“The morning shines, and the fresh field
Calls on; we lose the prime, to mark how spring
The tender plants.
How Nature paints her colours; how the bee
Sits on the bloom extracting liquid sweets.

“The Morning—from the dawn to the hour when the sun has gained greater power and, higher above the horizon, ‘flames in the forehead of the eastern sky’—has always been marked as one of the most grateful by the lovers of Nature; nor is there any time more delicious or exhilarating. The breezy freshness, the serenity, and cheerfulness which attend the early part of the day, never fail to impart a kindred feeling to every living thing, and doubtless the most sublime and lovely descriptions of the poets are those which relate to the Morning.

“Nature is never seen, in this climate at least, to greater perfection than at about nine o’clock in the mornings of July and August, when the Sun has gained

John Constable, R.A.

sufficient strength to give splendour to the landscape, 'still gemmed with the morning dew,' without its oppressive heat; and it is still more delightful if vegetation has been refreshed with a shower during the night.

"It may be well to mention the different appearances which characterize the Morning and Evening effects. The dews and moisture which the earth has imbibed during the night cause a greater depth and coolness in the shadows of the Morning; also from the same cause, the lights are at that time more silvery and sparkling; the lights and showers of Evening are of a more saffron or ruddy hue, vegetation being parched during the day from the drought and heat.

'And Sture, that parteth with his pleasant floods
The Eastern Saxons from the Southern nigh,
And Clare, and Harwich both doth beautify.'

"This view of the beautiful valley of the Stour—the river that divides the counties of Suffolk and Essex—is
Dedham taken from Langham, an elevated spot to
Church the N.W. of Dedham, where the elegance
of the tower of Dedham Church is seen
to much advantage, being opposed to a branch of
the sea at Harwich, where this meandering river
loses itself. This tower from all points forms a

“Summer Morning”

characteristic feature of the Vale; it was the gift of Margaret, Countess of Richmond, mother of Henry VII. The chancel of Dedham Church is perhaps unequalled in the beauty of its proportion and details, especially the windows, which are lofty and of the most graceful forms: it is a fine instance of what the style of architecture termed Gothic is capable of, when in the hands of a master. In it is a stately monument, erected ‘to the memory of the Reverend William Burkitt, M.A., Vicar of this Parish, the excellent commentator on the New Testament. He is celebrated for his extensive learning; his admirable labours being, even at this day, most beneficial to the pastors of the church in the fulfilment of their ministry, as well as to the private Christian for his instruction and comfort.’ He passed here his long and useful life, and died in 1703:—

‘The calm delights
Of unambitious piety he chose,
And learning’s solid dignity.’”

But the original intention of furnishing descriptive letterpress was not carried out. Lucas’s plates were left to tell their own story, but what a wooden-headed public it was to see nothing in the painter! When we turn now to the “Cornfield” and the “Glebe

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Farm" in the National Gallery in London, to the "Yarmouth" in Sir Charles Tennant's collection, to the "Sea Beach" sold at Christie's in 1903, we realise that however powerful may be the work of the engraver, he could not reproduce the cool depth and variety of colour, nor the sparkling brilliancy of the pictures themselves.

Leslie asserts that the first plate engraved was of "Dedham Mill," from a slight sketch, but that Constable did not again place anything so unfinished in Mr. Lucas's hands. Lucas, however, says that is a mistake. The first engraving was the small "Hampstead Heath" called the "Vignette." The figure on the brow of the bank was Collins, the painter, who happened to be sketching on the Heath at the time that Constable was at work.

An engraving called "On the Orwell" was originally intended to have been included in the *English Landscape*. When it came to the final arrangement Constable rejected it; not that he can have been dissatisfied with the plate itself, as it is a particularly fine one, but because he did not approve of the subject. "The ships," he writes to Lucas, "are too commonplace

“On the Orwell”

and vulgar, and will never unite with the general character of the book. Though I want variety, I don't want hotch-potch. We must not have one uncongenial subject ; if we have, it cannot fail to tinge the whole book.” This was one of the fourteen plates published by Lucas after Constable's death.

CHAPTER VI.

MISUNDERSTOOD.

Evidence on oath—Lawrence's frames—The Life class—Illness and politics, 1831—Education of his boys—"Waterloo Bridge," 1832—A shot from Turner's gun—Palette knife—The passing of friends—"Winter"—Praise from Lady Morley—Assassin critics.

CONSTABLE'S intention was to have published several more mezzotint plates had they been received with popular favour, but as the work proceeded the conviction was forced upon him that it was hopeless to expect any remuneration for the time and money he was spending on the work. He bore his disappointment with fortitude, but considering the hopes with which he had started, and the care and pains he lavished on the production of the plates, bitter disappointment it could not fail to be. And so he fell ill again from this and other causes (other causes being the anxiety incidental to getting his pictures ready for the summer exhibitions), not only by his own account, but by that of a friendly visitor. "B—— was here yesterday," he writes to Lucas, "and said, 'Why, damn it, Constable, what a

The Hanging Committee

damned fine picture you are making; but you look damned ill, and you have got a damned bad cold.' So that you have evidence *on oath* of my being about a fine picture, and that I am looking ill." When he had sent "Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows" and "Yarmouth Pier" to the Royal Academy, he recovered. Our illustration of the former is from an unpublished plate in the possession of Mr. E. E. Leggatt.

In the previous year, 1830, Constable was on the hanging committee of the Academy and complained that he was "harassed with pictures, especially portraits, the painters of them all believing that they can easily fill the shoes of Lawrence." Not only were the canvases a trouble to him but also the frames, on account of their size. He once remonstrated with an exhibitor on this point, whose defence was that his frames were exactly on the pattern of those of Sir T. Lawrence. "It is very easy," Constable pungently retorted, "to imitate Lawrence's *frames!*"

Besides the hanging work he took his turn in setting the model for the Life class, and threw himself into the task with his accustomed energy. He never failed to emphasise the importance of painting from Nature, preaching no more than he practised, for he kept his favourite dock leaves in

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water in his studio to finish the foregrounds of his pictures. On one occasion he sent green boughs from Hampstead for a background to his model, and his men narrowly escaped being arrested by the police for robbing some gentleman's garden. With these materials he made a garden for his figure which, in spite of its being taken for a Christmas decoration, was generally liked and approved of.

Towards the end of the year 1831 his threatened illness assumed a graver character, and was accompanied by a terrible depression of spirits, which led him to regard the outcome of the political events of this period, especially the introduction of the Reform Bill, with the greatest apprehension. The exclamation that "No Whig Government ever can do good to this peculiar country" must, therefore, be attributed more to jaundice than to settled political conviction; for shortly afterwards he writes to Leslie:—"I am now, perhaps, quite well, and I can give you no greater proof of it than by letting you know that the Reform Bill now gives me not the least concern. I care nothing about it, and have no curiosity to know whether it be alive or dead. . . ." In truth he was no politician, and at all times, well or ill, his home, his children, and his painting completely filled his thoughts.



"Waterloo Bridge" (p. 114).

His Boys' Tutor

The responsibility of providing for the education of his boys on a small income was no light one, and this added anxiety may have had something to do with his ill health. Mr. Boner, we are told by Leslie, had been domiciled for some time with Constable as tutor to his sons, but he now felt that he could no longer afford to keep a private tutor for them, and he makes his decision known to Boner in a letter from Well Walk, October 25th, 1831:—

“I was not aware (so much has your sad illness discomposed me) that your quarter had expired, I therefore delay not to send the amount, a twenty-pound cheque. I have determined, dear Boner, not to continue the present plan of educating my boys. I am quite satisfied with you in all respects, especially your great kindness and attention, your patience with Charles has been very great. My objection to it is only one, namely, its great expense, which far exceeds the means of my very limited income. I am sadly troubled, and always have been, with the education of my boys—they are not fit for schools; nor could I endure at my last hour the thought of wilfully plunging their early minds into *accumulative evil*, the real word for schools, they are out of the question; and such expense as I have hitherto paid I can no longer afford—they must do like

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their father, as well as they can without one. But, dear Boner, as I did not give you any notice of declining your further services, some recompense should be made. I have therefore given the bearer another cheque for five pounds, which, if you shall think it a fair forfeit, he will deliver to you. *I now know not what to do.*" John, his eldest son, was eventually sent to school in 1833.

His "Waterloo Bridge" was exhibited in 1832. Constable made a sketch of the scene during the opening ceremony, and there are several small pictures of it in existence; of these

"Waterloo Bridge" I have traced five, of which the one on the staircase of the Diploma Gallery at Burlington House is a very fine example (see Plate). So long ago as September 1820 he tells Fisher that he is putting his river Thames (evidently a "Waterloo Bridge") on a large canvas, and thinks it promises well. He refers to it again in 1824 as occupying his thoughts, but it gave him more trouble than any of his other pictures; it was constantly altered and repainted, and it was not until eight years afterwards that it was completed and hung in an exhibition. This "Waterloo Bridge" is one of the glories of Sir Charles Tennant's collection. A large sketch for the finished picture was sold in 1896 in Sir Julian Goldsmid's sale for two thousand guineas.

In his autobiographical recollections C. R. Leslie

Turner's Gun

tells an amusing story about this picture which is worth repeating. "It was placed," he says, "in the school of painting, one of the small rooms of Somerset House. A sea piece by Turner was next to it, a grey picture, beautiful and true, but with no positive colour in any part of it. Constable's 'Waterloo' seemed as if painted with liquid gold and silver, and Turner came several times into the room while he was heightening with vermilion and lake the decorations and flags of the City barges. Turner stood behind him, looking from the 'Waterloo' to his own picture, and at last brought his palette from the large room where he was touching another picture, and putting a round daub of red lead, somewhat bigger than a shilling, on his grey sea, went away without saying a word. The intensity of the red lead, made more vivid by the coolness of his picture, caused even the vermilion and lake of Constable to look weak. I came into the room just as Turner left it. 'He has been here,' said Constable, 'and fired a gun.' On the opposite wall was a picture by [George] Jones of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the furnace. 'A coal,' said [Abraham] Cooper, 'has bounced across the room from Jones's picture and set fire to Turner's sea.' The great man did not come into the room again for a day and a half;

*A Shot
from
Turner's
Gun*

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and then in the last moments that were allowed for painting, he glazed the scarlet seal he had put upon his picture, and shaped it into a buoy."

The rough texture of the painting, owing to the liberal use of the palette knife, quite choked off the public, and was more than even his brother-artists could swallow. De Wint, however, admired his work so much that on walking back from the Academy with him, he offered to give Constable a knife of silver of exactly the same size and shape in exchange for the one he had been using during the day, but Constable declined. All that his friend Stothard could say was, "Very unfinished, sir." And so, after all the trouble and care bestowed upon it, the picture was a failure from the point of view of popularity. Besides "Waterloo Bridge," Constable exhibited in 1832 "Sir Richard Steele's House, Hampstead," "A Romantic Cottage, Hampstead," and "Moonlight"—all small pictures.

Illness and death amongst those near and dear to him clouded the rest of this year. His eldest daughter fell very seriously ill with scarlet fever. John Dunthorne, son of the plumber and glazier of East Bergholt, in whose company on the banks of the Stour Constable's first attempts at landscape-painting had been made, was sickening

*The
Passing of
Friends*

Death of Fisher

unto death from incurable disease of the heart. Constable was devoted to young John; he had helped and advised him constantly in his artistic work (for John was also an artist by profession), and their relations were more those of father and son than of mere friendship, so that the prospect of his early death affected him deeply, so deeply that he writes to Leslie, "I do not contemplate a happy old age even if I should attain it." Before John Dunthorne died (in October) Constable lost his intimate friend, Archdeacon Fisher, who was not only his earliest patron, but one in whom he reposed the utmost confidence. "The closest intimacy," he writes, "had subsisted between us for many years; we loved each other and confided in each other entirely, and his loss makes a sad gap in my worldly prospects."

No wonder that the autumn of 1832 was a gloomy one. "I shall pass this week at Hampstead, to copy the 'Winter,' for which, indeed, my mind is in a fit state." "Winter" was a picture "*Winter*" by Ruysdael belonging to Sir Robert Peel, and Lucas says that the loan of it was accompanied by a condition that some addition or omission should be made in order that the composition might be somewhat different. Constable complied by introducing a dog behind the principal figure; but in all other

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respects the imitation was so perfect that, looking on the surface only, few could detect any difference.

The next work of importance upon which he was engaged was a picture of Englefield House for its owner, Mr. Benyon de Beauvoir, of which Leslie tells us that, though the subject was unpromising, he made a beautiful picture.

*Praise
from Lady
Morley*

It was apparently received with more favour than usual in the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1833. Lady Morley, to whom he showed it, exclaimed, "How fresh, how dewy, how exhilarating!" "And I told her," he says, "that half of this, if I could think I deserved it, was worth all the talk and cant about pictures in the world."

Constable's letters at this time are frequently addressed to Mr. George Constable, who, although he bore the same name, was no relation of his whatever; a firm friendship sprang up between them, which seems to some extent to have filled the gap, in his last years, created by the death of older friends.

Letters to Boner in 1833 describe how some of his pictures were by chance brought to the hammer at Christie's, and how their appearance in the auction-room was made the occasion of a severe and bitter attack upon him by a critic in one of the newspapers. This rankled in his mind,

*Assassin
Critics*

The Hireling's Attack

sensitive at all times, and made him very angry. All his friends whom he consulted advised him to keep silence, and to take no notice whatever of the unmannerly scribe, not even in conversation. “ ‘Do nothing,’ they say ; ‘do not let him see that his infamous paragraph has received any notice of yours.’ I have seen Sheepshanks, and he says the same, that I am only the higher in his estimation. Mulready will never notice anything but an attack upon his moral character. Mr. Sheepshanks would have given thirty-five guineas for the picture had he known of it. Old Allnutt is quite angry at losing it, and says Christie should not have put it up. Mrs. Ludgate ” (or Sandgate, to whom these pictures belonged) “ has written a very kind letter to me to say that all she did was by Chaplin’s advice ; and he forsook her house some days before the sale. It is supposed that he or his friends are possessed of many of the pictures ; she left no reserve on any of them, unfortunately. Her note to me during the delivery of the pictures was dictated by Chaplin, whom she calls *base*. Sir M. Shee and Mulready both say I was quite right not to notice it at all in any way. Let such wretches feel that I consider name and character beyond the reach of such attacks. But I have little doubt that such villainy will be unmasked in time. What can such a man be

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but an assassin—to destroy character, livelihood, and everything else, and to let himself out for hire to write against everything good, for pay? It is quite impossible that I could compound with an assassin.”



“The Valley Farm” (p. 142).

CHAPTER VII.

LECTURER.

A new part—First lecture, 1833—Encouraged—Worcester Exhibition, 1834—Sane criticism—Fuseli's favourite—*Worcester Journal*—"Harvest Noon"—"Stour Valley"—"Water Mill"—Visits Worcester—More lectures, 1835—The Bayeux Tapestry—Infancy of Landscape—Perspective—The Venetian School—The Dutch School—An independent art—Tributes to the men of old—Extempore—A "genuine" Constable--Drivel.

IN the summer of 1833 Constable made his *début* as a lecturer, taking as his subject "An Outline of the History of Landscape Painting." He jokingly alludes to his new *rôle* in a letter to Leslie in these words:—"Remember that I play the part of Punch on Monday, at eight, at the Assembly Rooms at Hampstead." Leslie tells us that this and the other lectures he afterwards delivered at the Royal Institution and at Worcester were never written out. He depended upon slight notes only, and upon copies and engravings of the pictures to which he intended to allude, and upon certain tables of painters chronologically arranged. These he found sufficient,

*A New
Part*

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but many of his friends urged him to commit his lectures to paper, and to these requests Leslie attributes the finding of an abstract amongst his papers which he thinks Constable must have intended to amplify at his leisure. It is enough to show the scheme which he had in his mind.

He traces landscape art from the specimens found upon the walls of Herculaneum and Pompeii, of a purely decorative kind, through the earliest
First painters of the Renaissance, Cimabue,
Lecture Giotto, and the illuminated MSS. of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to the maturer years of the great Italian schools culminating in Titian, Domenichino, and the Caracci. From thence he passes to the Poussins, Claude Lorraine, and the Flemish and Dutch masters—Rubens, Rembrandt, Hobbema, Ruysdael, and Cuyp. At this point landscape art rapidly declined, and for nearly a whole century it lived upon mannered and feeble imitations of past tradition. From this degraded state the revival of healthy landscape painting is mainly due to the Englishmen—Wilson, Gainsborough, Cozens, and Girtin.

This is a brief summary of the first Hampstead lecture, which was afterwards developed into a series of four delivered at the Royal Institution in Albemarle Street.

Successful Lectures

Some reference to a subsequent Hampstead lecture is found in a letter to Boner dated June 26, 1835. "I gave another lecture last Monday, the 22nd, at the request of Mr. Holford and the committee. It went off immensely well. I was never flurried, only occasionally referring to notes. I spoke what I had to say offhand. I was an hour and a half, and was 'novel, instructive, and interesting,' as the committee, Messrs. B., H., and L., told me. So it pleased very much. I shall now know exactly what to do at Worcester. Mr. G. Young was there, and said I had much in me to make a lecturer. He gave me a few lessons, and will continue his hints. He said I had the main thing—I could command my audience."

In June 1834 the first general exhibition of paintings had been held at the Athenæum, Worcester, and Constable exhibited the "Barge on the Stour," which was thus noticed by the *Worcester Exhibition Herald*, June 14, 1834:—

"Only a part of the vessel is seen with a girl on board, whose person, all but her head and shoulders, is intercepted from view. The boy who manages the barge is hauling tight the rope with which it is belayed, while the water-gate is unlocking. The action of the coarse-clad, sturdy labourer opening the passage is one of considerable

Encouraged

Worcester Exhibition

Sane Criticism

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bodily exertion, cleverly expressed. The rugged old bay horse, somewhat foreshortened, is towing down a slight descent; the driver and his dog are rough diamonds for a Gainsborough or a Morland, executed with surprising truth and vigour. Jan Fyth, if alive, could not produce a better dog. The abrupt, strong shadows of the massive timber frame, the bed or channel of the rock, the water, the rude foreground enriched by broad dock leaves and other aquatic herbage and grasses, are painted with the same force and spirit. The two aged trees on the off bank spread their uncouth tops into a commanding extent of shadow, softened by the warm tints and wild forms of their rugged, fantastic branches, which add to the picturesque character of the scene. The level gleam of light on the middle distance, bounded by rising grounds and a village church, is worthy of any of Rembrandt's most capital landscapes. The lower and middle parts of the sky are diversified with light, hovering clouds; the upper part is overcast with a threatening shower. For depth of effect and disdainful energy of brush this is certainly one of the best of the artist's views which I have seen; it has very little of that peculiarity produced by touches of white or grey scattered over the dark masses of many of his pictures—a manner which has a strange, harsh effect when viewed near, and requires to

Admirable Appreciation

be mellowed by distance. If the pencilling does not possess the crash and fire of Borgognone's or Salvator's, it possesses much of their extraordinary power. This prospect is a striking truth, told with a rough and fearless confidence, which cannot fail to make a strong impression. The painter has showed his way to celebrity, elbowing down all ceremonious opposition. He is above the niceties of handling. In the picture now under notice he has had his eye constantly on the *whole*; the style is altogether original; and it would have a capital effect in a gallery."

This exhaustive effort of description from an evident admirer of Constable's work is interesting, showing the point of view from which all contemporary critics approached it, but which, in this case at least, was tempered by a genuine appreciation and admiration of those qualities of truth that the rough methods of the artist prevented others from recognising.

This picture is called "A Barge on the Stour" in the Worcester catalogue; Constable, however, alludes to it as "The Lock" in a letter to Mr. Leader Williams, father of Mr. B. W. Leader, *Fuseli's Favourite* R.A. "I beg you will accept my best thanks," he writes, "for the very kind manner in which you mention my pictures. That you should really have taken the trouble to visit my 'Lock' so

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often is a sincere compliment to the picture. I cannot now forbear to tell you that the picture of 'The Lock' was greatly esteemed by the fastidious critic, Fuseli, when it was at the Academy. It was his constant visit (leaning on the porter's arm) every Sunday morning."

This exhibition of paintings at Worcester in 1834 was successful enough to be followed by another in the following summer, in which Constable was represented by five pictures. In *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, July 23, 1835, the following notice of three of them appears, the "Harvest Noon" being the celebrated canvas better known as "The Cornfield":—

"No. 50, 'Harvest Noon: A Lane Scene,' by J. Constable, R.A. This painter practises a very peculiar manner of handling in his landscapes, which, when restrained within due bounds, is certainly not deficient in powerful effect, but is apt to wander into strange ostentatious roughness that in its excess outrages nature and offends good taste. There are several pictures from his brush in the present collection; two of them are very striking performances, and force themselves on our notice; and there are others which have less of size and pretension, but not less of merit. The first of the large ones, No. 50, is a beautiful composition, painted in a rich and glowing tone. A sudden turn in

*Worcester
Journal*

"*Harvest
Noon*"

Approved in Worcester

a lane brings an open gateway into full view, through which are seen reapers, and a cornfield stretching in sunny ripeness across the middle distance. Beyond this, the eye glances over some meadows and a winding river to a village and a church, which bounds the pleasant home-scene. In the immediate foreground, under a noble group of elms, which are effectively painted, a clear stream has tempted a shepherd boy to quit his charge for the pleasure of slaking his thirst, while his dog follows, half irresolutely, the sheep down the lane. The sunshine which flickers through the trees upon the road, the glowing complexion and red waistcoat of the boy, the bright flowers on the wayside, and the yellow waving corn on the high bank, contribute to the warmth of the foreground. The cornfield in the middle carries onward the rich hue, and the passage from thence to the cooler meadows and distance is managed without abruptness. The sky is rather too cold and stormy to suit the idea of heat, which the artist has excited by the colouring and action of the scene. There is, however, much to admire throughout, and though, in some parts, the freedom of execution amounts to coarseness, the general effect is not greatly injured by it.

“The same can hardly be said of its opposite pendant, No. 185, ‘Valley of the Stour—Morning.’ There are

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materials to form an interesting view. A bank of a rich earthy hue, well varied and broken, and surmounted by picturesque trees; a river winding through a vale, with corn-mills on its margin, and the town in the distance, are all ably disposed on the canvas. But in treating them the painter has given the utmost licence to his brush in his own extraordinary manner, and the result is less agreeable than it might otherwise have been. White and grey, and various light colours, are profusely dabbed on, as if splashed from a large brush, or are streaked and smeared about in a half-dry state, till the effect of the masses of shadow is weakness, and the trunks of the trees have hardly a shaded side left to relieve them. The whole picture acquires by this unusual method of painting, if it can be so called, a harsh tapestry appearance.

“No. 68, ‘A Water Mill.’ This mill, with men grinding their scythes, is a production of the same artist; but it is far more pleasing in effect than the last, though not so commanding in size or colouring. It is a rough scene well suited to his peculiar management, which appears here vigorous and just. The green foliage of the bank is, perhaps, too universally sprinkled with light touches, but it contrasts finely with the rich brown tone of the



"Stonehenge" (p. 144).

Visit to Worcester

mill. The light which is thrown on the side of the mill and on the water is sparkling and admirable. The tone of the picture, which appears to have been painted some years, is silvery and harmonious."

Contemporary criticisms of Constable's pictures are hard to find, and these from the Exhibitions at Worcester are written by men who were by no means insensible to the power of the artist and not blinded by prejudice in favour of the old school.

In October 1835 Constable visited Worcester at the invitation of Mr. Leader Williams, and delivered three lectures on October 6th, 7th, and 8th. In preparation for this course he writes on September 29, 1835, to Mr. Leader Williams:—

"It will be more agreeable to myself to lecture in the morning, as my tables and specimens can be better seen, and I hope it is now so planned. But I am very desirous, if not too late, that my second and third lectures should follow without a break; the first stands best alone, as a good deal of it is necessarily introductory to the others. Therefore if they were—

Tuesday }
Thursday }
Friday }

I should like it. . . . What is your hour? for I

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shall be pretty hard run. I have taken a place on the Sovereign Co. [Coach], and I shall be with you on Monday, but so late as not to be able to unpack my things, but I shall not want much at first; only we must be early in the morning on Tuesday, so that we can get the room ready and a cloth hung up. My four sheets of double elephant, about ten feet in height, and a few things besides. Write to me once more, one of your kind notes, to say the hour and how the days are, or if it was too late to make any change in the arrangements. Can you let Mr. Digby know that I am coming, and for what purpose—also Lord Northwick? They may chance to come, therefore I should see some of my friends, and not all strangers, save yourself. Sir William Beechey called this morning. He says my plan is excellent, and it is novel. He knows a good deal of landscape, and loves it, and, in short, like all real painters, his heart is with it. I feel myself in the situation of the lobster as very pleasant at first, but as the water got hotter and hotter, was sadly perplexed."

Constable's method of exposition, as employed in the Worcester course, is intensely interesting, although the reporter's work did not altogether please him. It may usefully be illustrated here from the contemporary account:—

"The rise and progress of landscape-painting being

Origin of Landscape

the proposed limit of the professor's subject, he commenced by showing that every variety of the art is divisible into two great branches—namely, the historic and the landscape. After glancing at the probable deficiency of the ancients in their acquaintance with the latter, assumed from the fact that no remains of its previous existence have been discovered since the long night of the Dark Ages, the lecturer illustrated the first faint attempt at its revival or origin by copies of the Bayeux tapestry, supposed to have been worked by the Queen of William the Conqueror, and rudely representing the effects of his conquest by men felling the trees of the conquered country. To represent this action, however simple, the artist was compelled to give some imitation, however ridiculously unnatural, of the trees and of the earth on which they stood—and this was landscape.

*Worcester
Lectures*

*The
Bayeux
Tapestry*

“The veneration in which these rude works are held in France was shown in the fact that when Napoleon projected the invasion of this country [England], he sent them round to all his principal cities and towns to stimulate the martial enthusiasm of the French.

“At the same early period similar attempts were made in the backgrounds of the paintings in illuminated missals.

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“Landscape in its infancy had never been known as a separate art, but only made its appearance as the accessory or humble attendant upon history, in filling up historical pieces. The first great step in the improvement of landscape was found in the fresco paintings of Giotto, 1336; and about this time the principle of perspective was discovered by Paolo Ucelli, who was so much absorbed in admiration of its effect that he scarcely afterwards opened his lips but to give utterance to an exclamation of delight at his discovery, which, strange to say, was nevertheless limited to horizontal perspective, and it was not until fifty years more had elapsed, that the oblique was discovered by Andrea Veneziano.

“Soon after him followed the two extraordinary brothers Van Eyck, who, with several others of the school which they formed, combined to furnish the paintings to ornament the Campo Santo. The lecturer here alluded to a collection of the works of these early painters now in our metropolis [London] for sale, and urged the propriety of their being made the property of the nation. In these pictures the introduction of landscape is attended by a curious minuteness in detail, but without any of the grandeur and power evinced in the historical parts. Next followed the names of Hemmelinck [? Memlinc]

Dürer's Landscape Work

and others, leading up to the German school from which sprang the great Albert Dürer, whose name, not on account of his own transcendent fame, but of the numbers of other great names to which he gave rise, formed another epoch in the progress of art, and influenced its most glorious achievements in after-times. From him and from the school to which he gave rise, at length came Titian, the greatest master of the Venetian school, and the first who placed landscape on a level with history. The lecturer referred to an engraving from Albert Dürer, which exhibited the first introduction of landscape of a correct and natural appearance into historical subjects; the chief object was simply the trunk of a tree running out of the side of the picture, drawn and represented with great truth. It was by the study of these Germans that the Italian painters perfected their own school.

*The
Venetian
School*

“Landscape first flourished in Venice, as it was in that luxurious city that colours had been brought to their greatest perfection upon which that, more than any other branch of painting, is dependent. It was a singular fact that Titian himself, when quite young, went into Germany, whence he brought three young men who instructed him in landscape-painting: they all died young.

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“ With the rise of the Venetian school, the Bolognese school also first became celebrated, and the Venetian artists went there; but instead of imbibing the Bolognese style, they softened it by introducing their own. This, too, constituted the difference between the Flemish and Dutch schools. The artists of the former travelling into Italy, blended its style with their own; whereas those of the latter, by never studying any but their own masters, retained their own peculiarities, their beautiful clearness, exactness, and minuteness, but did not add to these the great qualities of the other schools. We need no longer wonder at the fine arts flourishing so luxuriantly in the Middle Ages, when we reflect on the objects to which they were chiefly devoted.

“ At that time pictures were the only books from which the common people could derive any information of the history of their religion; and as these were almost exclusively the subjects on which the artists were employed, they devoted to the task their whole lives and energies as to a religious duty. And in this manner landscape-painting gradually sprang up; for it was impossible to paint a cross without ground for it to stand on, a sky, and other accessories. Thus landscape gradually advanced, till, from being the humble attendant

*The
Dutch
School*

*An In-
dependent
Art*

The Old Masters

upon history, it became able to stand side by side with it upon the same eminence, and you could hardly tell which was the most distinguished or the most indispensable. Afterwards, in the decline of history, you saw it like a dutiful child, supporting its aged parent, and lending its aid to uphold the feebleness of decay.

“The lecturer then passed an enthusiastic and elegant eulogium upon the superiority of the landscapes of the ancient masters, arising from the sentiment with which they were inspired, and spoke with great severity of those painters who were the mere vulgar copyists of Nature without a sense of her grandeur or her real beauty, and whose works had been raised to an injurious and false reputation by interested dealers and connoisseurs, whose only object was to find a market for the practice of fraud; and thus the public taste has been vitiated and had become depraved. The works of the truly great men who had shone in art were not mere copies of the productions of Nature, which could never be more than servile imitations. Yet, it should be remembered that the study of Nature in her most minute details was indispensable, and could never be made in vain. The paintings of that artist, be he who he may, would never be worth seeing if he drew without study. In Sir Joshua Reynolds’s finest pieces

*Tributes
to the Men
of Old*

John Constable, R.A.

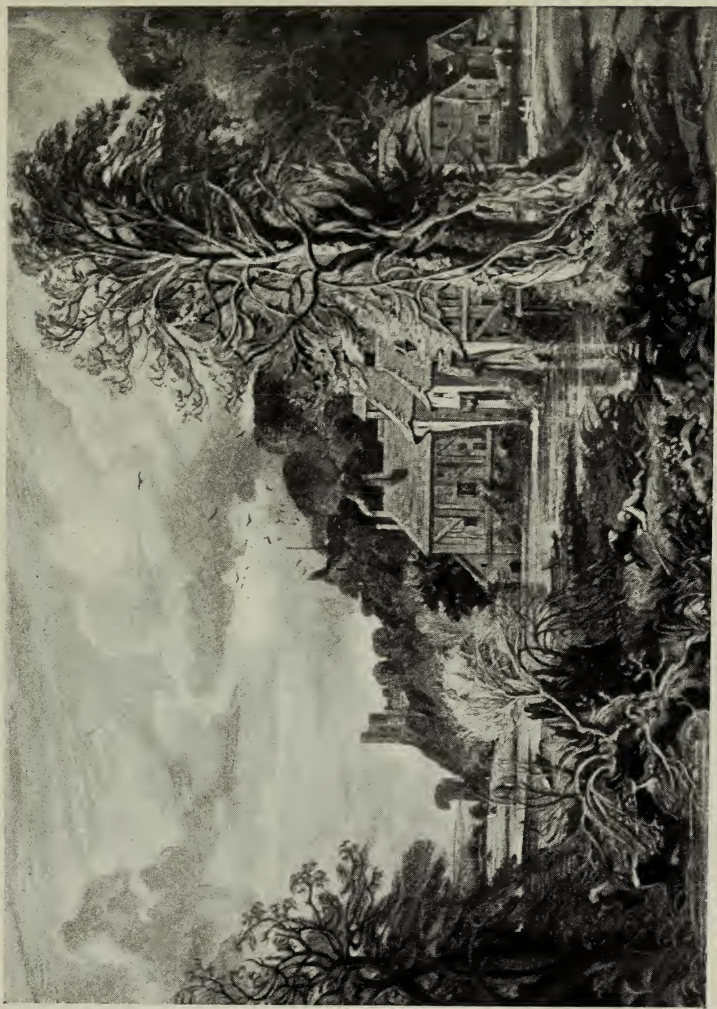
not one object was ever drawn without a model, and there could be no doubt it was the same with the greatest of the ancient masters.

“The lecture concluded with an impassioned description of the ‘St. Peter Martyr’ of Titian, painted in 1520, as marking one of the great eras of art, and in many respects excelling all other efforts of the pencil in after time.”

By the courtesy of the editor of *Berrow's Worcester Journal* I have been enabled to give the foregoing outline of the lectures, which was printed in the *Worcester*

Guardian on October 31st, 1835, probably *Extempore* the best summary that can be given,

because, as Leslie tells us, they were delivered *extempore*, and never committed to paper. Having said this much, the report must be taken for what it is worth, for I am bound to add that it by no means satisfied Constable, who writes to Mr. Leader Williams:—“I lately saw the editor of the *Worcester Guardian*: he is a very pleasant person, but I told him how sadly he had mangled and mixed up and contradicted all I had to say about painting; in fact, the first and second lectures were jumbled together (and, luckily for me, he did not hear the third); but, as it was all well meant and not inelegantly done, I expressed myself pleased with it.”



"Arundel Mill and Castle" (p. 145).

Which was Which?

Constable must have paid several visits to Mr. Leader Williams; and his son, Mr. B. W. Leader, R.A., relates a story of how a picture, really by his father, but probably touched by Constable, was afterwards sold as a genuine painting by the latter artist :—

“‘Salisbury from the Bishop’s Meadows,’ the large upright ‘Lock,’ the ‘Glebe Farm,’ and ‘Flatford Mill’ were among the pictures he sent to Worcester. The last three Constable asked my father to hang up in our dining-room for a time, he not having room in his house in town for them. My father, who amused himself with painting, copied an upright picture of a water-mill, and on Constable’s second visit to Worcester he took the copy away with him, saying he would work upon it. It was never returned, Constable dying shortly afterwards. My father I can recollect saying to me, ‘Mark my words, Ben, that copy will be sold for the original some day;’ and so it was! I saw it some years ago exhibited with a number of Constable’s works at the Grosvenor Gallery, having ‘John Constable, R.A.’ on the frame. I have in my possession a picture of my father’s painting of Hallow Park, near Worcester, on which Constable painted, introducing a glimpse of the river Severn; he also worked upon the distance.”

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In a letter dated September 1835, addressed to Mr. George Constable, we learn that the exhibitions of pictures at Worcester had been followed by “a drivelling parcel of sad stuff in the Worcester *Drivel* paper in the name of ‘Lorenzo.’ It is all about *ideal art*, which in landscape is sheer nonsense.” Constable was keen to deliver his lectures in Worcester to expose the fallacies of “Lorenzo,” and to teach his audience that a close study of Nature must come before its translation into any ideal form.

CHAPTER VIII.

LAST SCENE OF ALL.

Out of sorts—Holiday at Petworth—"Salisbury from the Meadows," 1834—"The Valley Farm," 1835—A son goes to sea—"The Cenotaph," 1836—"Arundel Mill," 1837—Death, March 31, 1837—Last address to the students—Character.

WE find Constable ill and out of spirits during the latter part of the year 1833. His great friend, Leslie, was about to leave England for America, whence, however, he returned after only a few months' absence, much sooner than either he or Constable expected. His favourite son, John, was to go to school, "the thought of which," he complains, with characteristic want of philosophy, "is breaking my heart, though I am told it is for his good." All this shows that he was in a very depressed condition, and one not likely to be improved when John fell ill at school, walked in his sleep, and then came home for the holidays, only to be laid up with rheumatic fever. Worse still, this rheumatic fever

*Out of
Sorts*

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next attacked Constable himself, and so severe was his illness that he did not shake it off for two months, and it left him altogether enfeebled. His work naturally suffered in consequence. He sent, in 1834, three pictures to the British Gallery, all of which had been exhibited before; and to the Royal Academy he was only able to send three water-colour drawings—"Old Sarum," "Stoke Pogis Church," and "An Interior of a Church," and a large lead-pencil drawing of a study of trees made in the grounds of Mr. C. Holford, of Hampstead.

In July of the same year he went on a visit to his friend Mr. George Constable at Arundel, the scene of the painting on which he was at work when death overtook him. He much enjoyed and derived benefit in health from this visit, and he speaks of both the Castle and the surrounding scenery with enthusiasm. While he was there he spent a day at Petworth, and Lord Egremont made him promise to stop with him, which promise he fulfilled a month or two later in company with Leslie and Phillips. This visit was also a great success.

Holiday at Lord Egremont gave the artists every
Petworth facility for seeing the country. With
Leslie and Phillips he went over Cowdray
Castle and made several sketches, and was delighted
with the picturesque barns and farm-houses of Sussex.

At Petworth

Constable spent a fortnight at Petworth, and filled a large book with sketches in pencil and water-colours, some of which were highly finished. He appears to have been an early riser, frequently coming back with a beautiful sketch before breakfast, and bringing home with him to his room anything which particularly attracted his attention, such as well-marked feathers, pieces of bark covered with lichen or moss, for the sake of some tint or special beauty of form. He even collected specimens of sand and earth, and kept them in bottles to remind him of the particular earth colour of any country that he was painting (Rosa Bonheur, as Frederick Goodall, R.A., reminds us in his *Reminiscences*, also indulged this habit), and, if it had been possible, would have commissioned Mr. George Constable to cut off the top of some shiny posts to add to his museum.

After this visit to Petworth he set to work on "Salisbury from the Meadows," a picture which he hoped would be considered his finest work; but Leslie says that, to his disappointment, it found no purchaser. He worked on this *from the Meadows* through the autumn of 1834, but either a sketch for this picture, or the picture in an unfinished state, was exhibited in Birmingham that year. Its title in the catalogue is "Salisbury Cathedral from the

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Meadows: Summer Afternoon—A Retiring Storm,” with the following lines :—

“ No tracks of Heaven’s destructive fire remain,
The fields and woods revive, and Nature smiles again.”

This picture of “Salisbury from the Meadows” was engraved by Lucas, and so successfully that Constable wanted several impressions of the plate in an unfinished state as sent to him for approval and correction, saying, “It never can nor will be grander than it is now.”

In 1835 Constable sent to the Royal Academy “A View of Willy Lott’s House” (also called “The Valley Farm,” now in the National Gallery, London). It was purchased by Mr. Vernon, who had seen it only once in the studio. In spite of its being exhibited in a somewhat unfinished state—for Constable says that by working on it through the autumn he converted the sleet and snow into silver, ivory, and a little gold—it was well received by the critics. In a letter to Mr. George Constable he writes :—“I have got my picture into a very beautiful state ; I have kept my brightness without spottiness, and I have preserved God Almighty’s daylight, which is enjoyed by all mankind, excepting only the lovers of old dirty canvas, perished pictures at a thousand

Charles Constable

guineas each, cart grease, tar, and snuff of candle." Of this picture he writes to Boner:—"You saw the completion of Mr. Vernon's picture, and knew its destination. It passed the ordeal of the Academy pretty well, its ice and snow being proof against the heat of criticism. After its return I worked exceedingly upon it, mellowing and finishing it to the utmost of my power ; and it is in the very best situation in the British Gallery that Mr. Lyons could give it, keeping all other landscape at a respectful distance. But poor Lee is pretty enough, and is still rather popular. Edwin Landseer is very slight in all his pictures—one a great dog as big as a calf, painted in a day. Another of a dog with an old woman's night-cap on and a broken tobacco-pipe in its mouth. This is taken for wit !" These allusions are to Sir Edwin's pictures called "The Sleeping Bloodhound" (a portrait of Jacob Bell's dog that had died from an accident) and "Comical Dogs." Lee, of course, was F. R. Lee, the landscape-painter, who died in 1879 at the age of eighty-one.

It now became the turn of his second son, Charles, to be started in life, and nothing would satisfy him but the sea ; so Constable, much against his will, placed him under the care of a captain of an East Indiaman, and the house was in
A Son goes to Sea
a stir engaged in fitting him out at a cost of £200,

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which the sale of the "Valley Farm" provided. This sum was not spent without regret, because it was to bereave him "of this delightfully clever boy, who would have shone in my own profession"—words which Leslie explains by telling us that Charles drew and etched excellently for one so young. Accordingly Charles went to sea, and subsequent letters of Constable's often allude to his sailings, the storms which he encountered, and his happier homecomings. At least he was convinced that the boy was better off where he was than in the Navy—"a hateful tyranny, with starvation into the bargain,"—in which he heard that the Admiralty already had twelve hundred midshipmen more than they knew what to do with.

The last eighteen months of Constable's life were quiet, and presaged in no way his sudden death. He appears to have been free from illness and "The full of work, for, in addition to his painting, *Cenotaph*" lectures at the Royal Institution and teaching at the Academy School fully occupied his time. The "Cenotaph" was painted and exhibited in 1836, together with a water-colour drawing of "Stonehenge." "Arundel Mill and Castle," which he had begun, had to be laid aside, as he had no time to complete both pictures, and he chose the "Cenotaph" because, as he said, he preferred to see Sir Joshua Reynolds's name



His Last Picture

and Sir George Beaumont's once more in the catalogue, for the last time at the old quarters in Somerset House. The "Cenotaph" was erected by Sir George Beaumont to the memory of Reynolds, and this picture is now in the National Gallery, London.

"Arundel Mill" was the picture on which he was engaged at the time of his death. Leslie tells us how they had met at a Royal Academy meeting and walked a great part of the way home together at night; how Constable seemed quite as animated and as well as usual, and how he stopped and crossed the street to console a little beggar girl, who had hurt herself, with a shilling; and how they parted in laughter, though it was the last time he saw him alive. The next day he worked hard at "Arundel Mill," and left the house but for a short evening walk on a charitable errand. After returning home he ate a hearty supper and went to bed; he was seized with acute pain in the night and died within an hour, on March 31st, 1837.

A *post-mortem* examination showed that he was suffering from no organic disease, and his death could only be attributed to sudden indigestion, to which a sedentary life and want of out-of-door exercise had probably rendered him liable. The *Morning Chronicle* for April

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4th, 1837, in the notice of his death, gives an account of his last address to the Royal Academy students:—

“He had attended the General Assembly of the Royal Academy on Thursday evening in their new edifice, went through the duties with his usual alacrity, and did not complain or appear at all ailing. After his return home, however, he felt himself unwell, yet did not think of getting medical advice immediately, and when it did come it was too late. He died on the following night. It is somewhat remarkable that it fell to his lot as Visitor, in the living-model room of the Royal Academy, to close on the previous Saturday the last and final session of the studies at Somerset House, the whole establishment being now transferred to the new building in Trafalgar Square. Upon the occasion just mentioned Mr. Constable addressed the students in a racy, friendly manner on the causes of the rise, progress, and decline of the arts, pointing out to them the true methods of study that lead to eminence, and warning them of the false principles which, though specious, terminate in disappointment and defeat, and stating his hope that in taking their last farewell of the edifice which had been, as it were, the cradle of British art, they would remember with grateful feelings the advantages they had derived from the instruction they had

The Promise Fulfilled

received within its walls, and be emulous to show that the principles imbibed in the old school of arts were such as would do honour not only to the new establishment, but to their native land. He then returned them his most cordial thanks for the constant attention they paid to him, and the diligence with which they attended to their studies, during his Visitorship. At the close of this address the students rose and cheered most heartily, never suspecting that this would be his last address."

Thus was Constable's life cut short whilst neither hand nor eye had lost the one its cunning nor the other its keen observation.

Whether, had he lived, his art would have shown for any length of time the like continuous progress, or whether his certainty of touch would have yielded to declining health, it is impossible to say. As it was, the hand of death struck him down before his artistic reputation suffered by any evidence of old age or failing skill, and his latest paintings were the complete fulfilment of the promise of his earlier years.

John Constable must have had a lovable nature, at least to those who knew him well. In society, from all accounts, he was unurbane, somewhat of a cynic, who gave too much rein to his tongue, and therefore he

John Constable, R.A.

could no more be called a popular man than a popular painter. But if he made few friends, once made he never lost them. He never seems to have *Character* wavered in his affections, and to the end of his life these friendships remained undisturbed. Constancy, in fact, was a strong trait in his character. So far as can be gathered from his own letters and those of his relations and friends, there is no trace of his ever having had even a passing love affair with any other woman than Maria Bicknell, and he was as devoted a husband as he had been a constant lover. To his family he was deeply attached, and however often his judgment may have been at fault—built, as it was perhaps, on rather narrow foundations—his heart was always in the right place. Sensitive he was, to a degree that seriously diminished the sum of happiness which, in the circumstances, a calmer nature would have enjoyed; but both in private life and in his dealings with picture-buyers he was a man of the strictest probity, having a high sense of honour which never failed him, and which he always most scrupulously acted up to, however much his pocket may have suffered in consequence.

CHAPTER IX.

HIS FORERUNNERS.

Landscape art—Old style—His message—Richard Wilson—Thomas Gainsborough — “Old Crome” — John S. Cotman — Stark — Vincent—Patrick Nasmyth—Callcott—Rise of water-colour—Paul Sandby—William Taverner—J. R. Cozens—Thomas Girtin—J. M. W. Turner—Constable and Turner—A frank Realist—Compared with Turner—Trusting to Time—John Varley—Peter de Wint—David Cox—W. J. Müller—Bonington—What Constable did.

CONSTABLE'S originality and power cannot be rightly appreciated without a careful study of landscape-painting in his day and some fifty years before it. This branch of art had greatly *Landscape* deteriorated in the eighteenth century; *Art* the masters of both the Dutch and Italian schools gave place, as they died, to a host of feeble imitators who forgot Nature in perfecting their conventional expression of what they vainly imagined Nature to be. They manufactured pictures in the studio on the accepted and, to them, correct principles of high art. The constituents of a fine landscape were

John Constable, R.A.

brought together, clouds, mountains, castles, rivers, bridges, cascades, trees, cattle and figures, with such adjuncts as the brain of the painter conceived to be appropriate ; these were set in their proper *Old Style* places by general principles of composition, and were defined by conventional methods of expression more or less resembling Nature. In like manner, the colour was entirely conventional. Greys and browns predominated, mixed with blue or yellow for the cooler or warmer tints, the proportion of each varying with the general scheme, but having only slight relation to the actual colour of the particular object painted. And though cloud perspective was little thought of, geological formation entirely ignored, and the leafage of trees reduced to a mechanical system of brush marks, it satisfied the connoisseurs and the public so well that it took all the dogged perseverance of which the modern school was capable to break down the barriers of this false tradition and to obtain some measure of popular appreciation.

Certain painters were more successful in this than others ; some led their admirers on step by step and educated them as their art progressed. Constable, on the other hand, disdained all such pandering to popular taste : he went straight to the goal before him, and delivered his message in his own way ; so

Richard Wilson

the people passed him by, and he was not recognised as a great artist, except by a few discerning persons, until long after his death. The origin of the revival of landscape in England can be traced to the work of Wilson and Gainsborough, as in another branch it had previously been indebted to Hogarth, and it will not be out of place briefly to review the landscape-painting of the last half of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth, and to consider the stage at which the art had arrived when Constable lived and worked, before attempting to decide the exact position to which his genius entitles him.

*His
Message*

I have mentioned Wilson's name first because he comes first in point of time, and because, steeped as he was in classical tradition, he yet must be assigned a prominent place in the revival of landscape-painting. So far, however, from showing originality, the scope of his art was strictly limited by the prevalent attitude of his generation towards Nature. Nature was a mere peg upon which to hang the mythological subject, framed in a correct composition of trees and lakes and classical architecture. But his colour is so delicate and pure, he made the sun to shine so gloriously, pervading the whole atmosphere in his picture, that we must be for

*Richard
Wilson,
1714-82*

John Constable, R.A.

ever thankful to him. There was something too honest and unaffected about his work to find much encouragement from his countrymen. They showered praise and commissions upon Zuccarelli, whose elegant feebleness decorates every private gallery in England, of whose landscapes a score may be counted for every one of Wilson's, and who therefore departed from England after a few years' residence a comparatively wealthy man, while they never recognised Wilson's merits, and their patronage was given to his pupils, such as George Barret, R.A., whose superficial style was far easier to understand than that of the master. So Wilson died in poverty.

It was not, however, upon this Franco-Italian soil that the seed of revival was to take permanent root and flourish. Gainsborough's art was based upon that of the Dutch and Flemish men, and it was owing to the closer and more honest observation of Nature practised by them that modern landscape-painting was to become what it now is. Apart from his great qualities as a portrait-painter, it is to Gainsborough that we mainly owe this revival in England. He made full use of his knowledge of the Dutch masters; they were, so to speak, the stock upon which the young shoot of his own originality was grafted;

*Thomas
Gains-
borough,
1727-88*



"Hampstead Heath" (p. 82).

Gainsborough

and though at first this influence upon his work was strong, as time went on it became more and more merged in and overshadowed by his own individuality. In spite of this strong Dutch influence, he was always essentially English. He painted the country which he knew and lived in, the Suffolk lanes and peasants; and although he was never careless of his composition, it was the legitimate pictorial arrangement of the scene he was looking on, and not an ideal one composed of classical buildings, stately groups of trees and lakes, after the manner of Claude and the Italians, having no actual existence save in the mind of the artist. It was this protest against the old idea that all natural and ordinary scenes, in Great Britain at least, were commonplace and unworthy of the artist's attention, which was ultimately to bear fruit and to be the guiding spirit of all that is healthy and true in modern art. Herein lies Gainsborough's chief claim to be the founder of the modern school of landscape in England. In Gainsborough's early years he was the painter of the oak tree, as Crome became in Norfolk. No one had so happily caught its special characteristics, the rough bark, the tortuous branches, and the rich clustering foliage. Afterwards he adopted a broader and, curiously enough, a more conventional touch;

John Constable, R.A.

he ceased to paint oak trees and only painted trees. This must probably be attributed to his treating landscape as a background for figures. In respect of colour Gainsborough remained, on the whole, faithful to the warm brown tones of the Dutch school. He did not sit down frankly to paint the colours of Nature, but he set himself rather to obtain the greatest possible effect in the more conventional scale, with such brilliant success as is seen in "The Market Cart" and "The Watering-place" in the National Gallery in London.

From Gainsborough it is but a step in point of time to the Norwich School. J. Crome, "Old Crome," as he was called, the greatest of them, lived a quiet and secluded life in his native town, and painted almost exclusively the surrounding scenery. He hardly even visited London (he is said once to have gone to Boulogne), and probably saw little of the work of either the great English painters of this period or of the Old Masters, except such examples as were to be seen in the private collections in Norfolk to which he had access. These contained chiefly Dutch pictures, and he became a great admirer and a close follower of Hobbema, Ruysdael, and others. It is said that the last words he uttered were in praise and admiration of Hobbema. His painting, however, was broader, and his treatment

“Old Crome”

of foliage at times much freer than that of the Dutchmen. There is a woody landscape in the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington (Sheepshanks Gift) where the oaks are finely grouped under a large cumulus cloud touched by the late afternoon sun; and another large picture in the same room, called “On the Skirts of the Forest,” a fine composition of trees standing out against the sky in golden brown tones, shows that Crome was not always concerned with the high finish and hard foliage of the Dutch masters. In the National Gallery “Mousehold Heath” is a beautiful example of broad treatment of a simple subject, worthy in every way to be in the National Collection. A clear evening sky, some rolling clouds, an open heath fading into far distance, a figure or two, and some thistles and weeds in the foreground sum it up, but these are quite enough, and as you stand before it Crome carries you to the very spot, and you almost raise your hand to shade your eyes from the late evening light. Nevertheless, Crome, we are told, did not work much out of doors; he only took his rough sketches and notes and painted his pictures in the studio from them, which may perhaps account for the conventional brown tones in his work, and the absence of fresh local colour. The success of a landscape-painter in studio work depends upon the amount of time he devotes to out-of-

John Constable, R.A.

door studies, the closeness of his observation, and the accuracy of his memory. Some people possess the two last qualifications naturally more strongly than others, but I venture to say that in all cases there is a particular charm, more or less evident, in the fresh, truthful sketches which are done upon the spot, when the impression on the mind and the eye is most vivid.

John S. Cotman is the next most important name connected with the Norwich School, and as a colourist he was superior to Crome. He also painted Norfolk scenery, and was specially fond of the sea coast and the Broads, but he by no means confined himself to these subjects. He visited other districts in his own country and travelled on the Continent. He was an accurate draughtsman, and painted both in oil and water colours with great breadth and force, and with a richness of colour which gives him a high place amongst the landscape artists of his time. As a water-colour artist Cotman will probably become even more appreciated than he is now. His blues, burnt siennas, and yellows must have been rather crude when freshly painted, but now, mellowed by the flight of time, the effect is extremely rich. The composition of his pictures is admirable. One of the largest and finest of his oil paintings is a picture of St. Malo in the possession of Mr. R. H. Benson.

Patrick Nasmyth

Crome's pupils, James Stark and George Vincent, never became so great as their master. Vincent might have been a worthy successor, but lacked steadiness and perseverance, so that, after early years of considerable promise, his work deteriorated rather than improved. Stark achieved some popular success, and was an industrious and careful painter, but he was no genius, and always clung closely to the Dutch tradition, though fresher in colour.

Stark,
1794-1859,
and
Vincent,
1796-1836

Mention must here be made of Patrick Nasmyth and Sir A. W. Callcott. There is much in Nasmyth's work akin to that of the Norwich School; it was also based upon the Dutch painters, and though fresh and clear in colour, with often a fine sense of light, it was without originality. He followed the small handling of the Dutchmen, and all strength and breadth were lost in detail. Sir A. W. Callcott was rather a follower of the classical school in his composition and his colouring, though not without traces of the influence of Van de Velde and Cuyp, especially in his subjects of calm seas and shipping. His popularity was assured, and he preferred to please his patrons by painting pretty pictures which required no effort of comprehension than to

Patrick
Nasmyth,
1787-1831,
and
Callcott,
1779-1844

John Constable, R.A.

develop his own individuality, so that both he and Nasmyth seldom rise above mediocrity.

We must now turn to the water-colour painters of the eighteenth century in order to trace the change

Rise of which was taking place in the development
Water of landscape-painting, for to them we owe
Colour more, perhaps, than to the painters in oils.

Be this as it may, the rise and progress of the English water-colour school is so remarkable, and its influence is so great, that we must glance at it in order to understand the change which it effected.

Paul Sandby, born in 1725, is sometimes called the founder of the water-colour school, and he was in some respects a greater artist than many of his successors who acquired fame, but it is a question whether this distinction is entirely deserved, as he painted mainly in body colours, as others had already done before him, and when he used transparent colour it was only to tint an outlined pen drawing.

Mr. Cosmo Monkhouse, in his *Earlier English Water-Colour Painters*, rightly urges that William Taverner could justly challenge Paul Sandby's claim to this title. Taverner was born in 1703, almost a quarter of a century before Sandby, and he died in 1772. Mr. Cosmo Monkhouse

William Taverner

says that he was "an amateur, not unknown to Dr. Smollett, who praises his drawings in *Humphrey Clinker*," and though he also painted principally in body colours, there are examples of his work in transparent colours, notably a view of Richmond Hill in the Whitworth Institute in Manchester. But the drawing in the Victoria and Albert Museum, though in body colours, is a most remarkable one; both in colour and in *technique* it is far in advance of the ordinary work of that time. It is called a "Classic Landscape," and is a woodland scene with a little sky and distant blue hills showing behind the wooded banks on the left; a man in a blue coat wends his way up a rough road bordering a small lake (in which the reflections of the opposite bank and the trees are broadly indicated with full, broken touches) towards two other figures on the bank. The distant hills and the trees in the middle distance are treated with a true painter's instinct for the value of masses, from a totally different and more advanced point of view than that of the topographical draughtsman; and though the foreground is a little heavy, it serves the purpose of throwing back the middle distance into its proper place. Blue, grey, and green tones prevail, but there is much variety of colour on a limited scale, and a sense of atmosphere rarely met with in contemporary landscape-painting. But

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what differentiates Taverner from others of this early period of the eighteenth century is his broad and strong use of the brush instead of the pencil in a manner which steps at one bound across the topographical artists and brings us within sight of Girtin.

For the progress of water-colour painting we are more indebted to J. R. Cozens than to Paul Sandby.

*J. R.
Cozens,
1752-99* He went farther in the use of his materials than any of his predecessors, except perhaps Taverner, and although he did not discard the old method of under-painting with Indian ink or some neutral tint upon which the local colour was washed in, he did produce effects of sunlight and atmosphere never attempted before his time. It is interesting to remember that Constable held him in such high esteem that in 1835, in a moment of enthusiasm, he wrote of him that he was the greatest genius that ever touched landscape.

*Thomas
Girtin,
1775-1802* Thomas Girtin was, however, the link between the old methods and the new. We have already seen how great an influence Girtin's drawings in the possession of Sir George Beaumont had upon Constable when he was first turning his thoughts to painting as a profession.

All progress is a gradual process, and it is impossible to say that this one practised entirely a new method



"Hampstead Heath" (p. 82).

Thomas Girtin

and that one an old. The work of a man of genius, as of men of humbler mould, is based upon the experience of the past. To Girtin, however, we chiefly owe the fact that when he died in 1802, only in his twenty-eighth year, those who practised the art of water-colour might justly claim to be called water-colour painters, and not draughtsmen only. Girtin broke through the old barriers which had confined architectural and topographical drawings; he saw that the use of water-colours might go beyond outline, neutral-tinted shadows, and pale washes of local colour; and he may lay claim to this—to have laid the foundation for the great genius of Turner, who, although a contemporary of Girtin, was, owing perhaps to his greater power of imagination and his wider aspirations, more tentative and less certain of himself, so that, in acquiring his vast store of information, he did not develop his full powers until Girtin had passed away. In studying Girtin's drawings in the Victoria and Albert Museum we find what a great step in advance he made. There is something in his work which sets him on a distinctly higher level than all his contemporaries; we see at once that he is not a draughtsman only, but a painter; and although his successors might improve upon the variety and purity of his colour scheme, they could hardly go farther in

John Constable, R.A.

broad, accurate, and powerful brush work. In the Victoria and Albert Museum there are several fine examples of his work: "Rievaulx Abbey," rather violent, perhaps, in its contrasts of light and shade at the expense of the half-tones, but a very strong painting. "A View on the Wharfe" is hardly more than a monochrome, but so broad and masterly in the touch, the sheep and figure in the foreground so slightly, but so perfectly, indicated, that by this alone we can recognise him as a master of modern methods. "A Street in Weymouth," again, is broadly sketched in with a full brush, and reminds one of many of De Wint's slight sketches. Girtin, in fact, seems to be the first water-colour artist who aimed at something higher than the mere truthful record of topographical facts, and there is evidence of strong individual feeling, to which he gives full play. This dexterity in *technique* was perhaps a little over-satisfying to him, leading him to be content with such brilliant achievements as were easily within his reach.

It was not so with Turner. Turner was never content; the mastering of one difficulty did but whet his appetite for more. Even before Girtin's death Turner was doing wonders in water-colours, and although his oil pictures at this time, and for some years afterwards, continue to have the dark tone of the Dutch

Turner

School, in water-colours he was beginning to paint with astonishing subtlety those effects of light and atmosphere which he afterwards carried to such great perfection in both mediums. Turner stands by himself, and great as is the place which he occupies in the history of English landscape-painting, the influence he exercised on its development and progress is less clearly traced than in the case of Constable. Turner's industry was extraordinary; he had a wonderful memory and the power of most accurate observation, and combined with these qualities was the sense of beauty of form in the highest degree. His oil pictures are generally classified in three periods—the early, middle, and late periods. But, as in nearly all other cases, there is a gradual transition from one period to the other. His early pictures were sombre in tone; always fine in composition, but showing strongly the influence of the Dutch masters. "Calais Pier" in the National Gallery is black and heavy with an uncomfortable patch of blue in the middle of the sky. "The Shipwreck" (1805) is painted in like manner. "London from Greenwich," a very fine picture painted in 1809, is still brown in tone, but nobly composed and full of atmosphere. Then comes the immortal "Frosty Morning," with the tender glow of sunrise forcing its way through the light mists of a

*J. M. W.
Turner,
1775-1851*

John Constable, R.A.

winter day, where you feel that the ground is hard and the ploughman is out in vain. And after he had passed through a phase of frank imitation both of Poussin and of Claude, we gradually reach the middle period in which he produced "Crossing the Brook," "The Bay of Baiæ," "Ulysses deriding Polyphemus," and many others where the love of light and delicate atmospheric effects grows stronger and stronger, until we come to the last period of the Venetian pictures, "Rain, Steam, and Speed," and the latest of all, which completely puzzled the critics, who, on finding themselves out of their depth, seized upon a story of partial blindness or insanity to cover their retreat.

Turner was unfortunately careless as to the permanency of his oil pictures, and the methods he employed to obtain that brilliancy which he was seeking were not always sound. He probably painted very rapidly, laying on a solid ground, glazing, and repainting solidly, one process on the top of the other, without allowing the pigments proper time to dry; for we learn that some of his pictures suffered deterioration even before they left the walls of the Academy, so that it is difficult to form a true idea of their original colour. This, of course, is not said of all, for we can hardly believe that others have suffered materially from the ravages of time. Turner's genius, however, can best

Constable and Turner

be appreciated by a study of the wonderful collection of water-colours in the National Gallery, where his extraordinary mastery over the many technical difficulties which he never shunned, and his deep poetical conception, is most strongly felt.

That Turner's art has influenced his successors (in water-colours especially) is undeniable, but the fact remains that he was too rare a poet to have many imitators. He occupies a position so far apart from all others that, though we look, and wonder, and admire, we turn from

*Constable
and
Turner*

him to interpret Nature, maybe more prosaically, but in our own way. Possibly Constable looked upon his work somewhat from this point of view. In his letters he several times mentions some wonderful picture by Turner in the Royal Academy of the year, but not as if it moved him very deeply, nor as if it had the power of exercising much influence over his own work. This is what he writes to Fisher on one occasion in 1828:—"Turner has some golden visions, glorious, and beautiful; they are only visions, but still they are art, and one could live and die with such pictures." In truth Constable's and Turner's aims differed very widely. The former was an uncompromising realist. He painted the scene before him exactly as he found it on a particular day and at a particular hour. That, at

John Constable, R.A.

least, was his rule, and the only exceptions I can make out that he permitted himself were—a change in the position of the water-wheel of Dedham Mill and an undue frequency of the appearance of the tower of Dedham Church in his pictures. *A Frank* *Realist* Turner made no such rule for himself. He altered the position of objects, and the contours of the land to suit his purpose. Truth he would have of a sort. The truth of light flickering through the mist, or catching the spray of the waterfall, the form of clouds in various degrees of altitude, the nature of rocks, and countless other effects were deeply studied and understood; but the actual scene he was painting was often so much idealised that it is difficult to recognise it. No wonder their ways were far apart.

In 1837, just after Constable's death, the *Spectator* thus compares him with Turner:—"As a landscape-painter Constable was distinguished for the vigorous truth of his representations of natural scenes, in the early part of his career; but latterly he had acquired a strange manner of trying to imitate the sparkle of sunlight after a shower, by scattering an infinity of little specks of white light all over the picture; this gave the appearance of a shower of sleet falling—an effect which the bleak and cloudy aspect of the scene

Constable's Effects

greatly assisted. Constable was the very opposite of Turner; his effects being as cold and watery as Turner's are fiery, and his delineations as literal in their fidelity as Turner's are fanciful. Like Turner's, however, Constable's paintings are deficient in repose—the prime necessity of beauty in a landscape. The elements are in an uproar—clouds raining, sun shining, smoke rising, water rushing, and trees and hedges looking very uneasy. We are reminded of those hard-working scenes in a pantomime typical of industry, where Nature seems to be one vast factory, and every object condemned to perpetual toil."

The fact is that Constable had some regard to the future and to the mellowing hand of Time in painting his pictures. So that now, some seventy or eighty years after they have left his easel, we are not disturbed by this spottiness which the critic then called "a shower of sleet," or "carrying on a Meal-Tub Plot against Nature." The same effect which induced the picture-dealer to glaze "Waterloo Bridge" with a coat of blacking and varnish, now only gives us that sense of freshness and sparkling sunlight which the artist intended. Some five-and-thirty years afterwards the *Spectator* noticed "The Hay Wain," which was in the exhibition of the Old Masters at the Royal Academy. "The very fresh-

*Trusting
to Time*

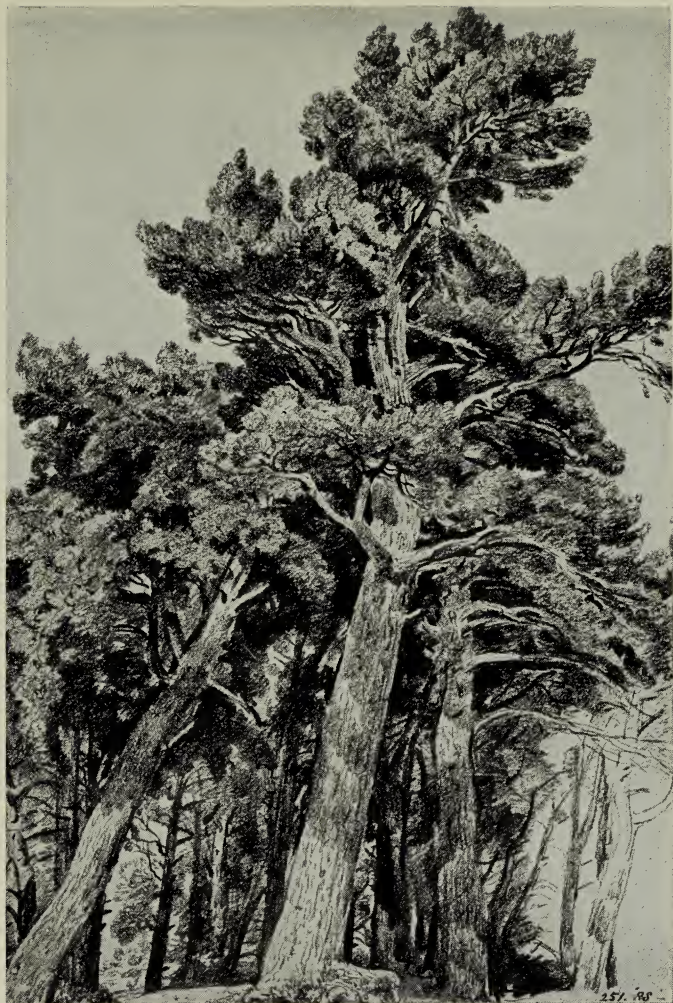
John Constable, R.A.

ness," it writes, "and the very fulness of Nature no less than her very modesty, are here painted with an ease and sobriety, a mastery over the brush, as well as a naturalness of treatment, which stamp the artist for a genius. As such he has always been acknowledged in France, where, unfortunately for us, he has more disciples than in his own country. But at all events we are not quite so foolish as some would have us believe."

No, perhaps not, but foolish enough to have taken so long to find him out !

Before leaving the water-colour school some reference must be made to those who followed Girtin and Turner.

John John Varley was living at the same time,
Varley, and in spite of his mannerisms, obtained
1778-1842 renown for the force and breadth of his style. Havell, Payne, and many others were working in the early years of the nineteenth century, but the strongest of them all was Peter de Wint, whose technical skill, sense of colour, and broad, free handling place him in the front rank of water-colour artists. He painted but little in oils, but such examples as exist—notably the two large landscapes in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and two fine oil pictures that were in the Winter Exhibition at Burlington House, 1903, lent



"Fir Trees at Hampstead" (p. 41).

David Cox

by Miss Tatlock—show that, had he seriously turned his attention to it, he would have acquired fame in this medium also. His sketches are altogether superior to his finished water-colour drawings, the latter being often tame in colour, overwashed, and conventional in touch, while the freshness, purity, and strength of many of his sketches have never been surpassed.

David Cox was also of this time, bright, fresh, and breezy: he painted in oils as well as in water-colours, but he is essentially a water-colour artist, just as Constable is essentially a painter in oils. Cox's oil pictures are well represented in the Birmingham Art Gallery, but only a few of the small ones show real feeling for the true quality of oil paint; in most of them one traces too clearly the water-colour method, as if he had employed the hog's hair brush with exactly the same intention as the camel's hair, with the result that there is a want of solidity which sometimes degenerates into weakness.

Technically, one of the greatest masters of oil and water-colour was W. J. Müller, whose skill in dealing with his materials is ever a source of wonder and admiration, but for insight and genuine depth of feeling he does not compare with David Cox.

*David
Cox,
1783-1859*

*W. J.
Müller,
1812-45*

John Constable, R.A.

R. P. Bonington, who died in 1828, while still a young man, lived and studied mainly in France, but he retained throughout his life his English feeling for landscape and his sympathy with Constable. He can claim his share of the influence of the English School upon the young French artists who were beginning to break away from classical tradition.

No attempt has been made to give an exhaustive list of the landscape-painters working before the year 1837, when Constable died, whose names deserve mention. Within the limits of this chapter it has been impossible to take more than a brief glance at the condition and progress of this branch of art at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries in order to show how the modern spirit crept in ; nor is it necessary to go farther in forming our judgment on Constable ; Bonington, De Wint, D. Cox, Müller, and others whose names I have not mentioned, were born after him and felt his influence. Enough, I hope, has been said to show that though the way had been in some measure prepared by Wilson, Gainsborough, Crome, and Girtin, it was Constable who first completely threw off the yoke of classical tradition, who followed Gainsborough in painting the quiet scenes of

*What
Constable
did*

Constable's Influence

his native country, who saw in Girtin the possibilities of true local colour, and who, in addition, had an honest love of Nature completely his own, so that he can be said to have founded a school of landscape-painting which has flourished in Great Britain and in France ever since. In France his immediate influence was even stronger than in England, and the reason is not far to seek. France had had no Gainsborough nor Crome, no Girtin nor Turner; hence Constable's straightforward, fearless imitation of what he actually saw came upon Frenchmen, when his pictures were first exhibited in their country, as a revelation. The young French artists were like sheep without a shepherd; they had lost faith in the old school, but could not find the way of escape, and Constable pointed it out to them. In England the case was different. Constable did not stand alone. There were others who had already burst the bonds, and were showing originality and power of their own. All that is here claimed for Constable is, that what is truest and most lasting in the modern schools of landscape-painting, Romantic and Impressionist, as they have been called, can be traced rather to his influence than to the example of any other painter that can be named.

CHAPTER X.

APPRECIATION.

French witnesses—Bürger—Delacroix—Chesneau—Pichot—Wolf—Brownell—"A Deserted Mill"—The Barbizon School—The inevitable change—Constable's art—Mannerism—Taken to task—Ruskin's point of view—Daubigny—Pre-eminently a painter—Sense of proportion—Constable's sketches—Fleeting effects—His water-colours—A great artist.

As the statement with regard to Constable's influence is not likely to pass unchallenged, I will endeavour to justify it as far as I am able. Some evidence I *French* have already given of the stir created by *Witnesses* the exhibition of Constable's pictures in the Louvre in 1824. In addition to this I will call some French witnesses.

Bürger, in his *Histoire des Peintres, École anglaise* (1863), says:—"Les idées de Constable sur la nature, sur le paysage, sur la manière de l'interpréter, pourraient être signées par quelque paysagiste français de la moderne école. Il est vrai que Constable est incontestablement un des initiateurs de la pléiade qui a régénéré le paysage en France, il-y-a environ trente ans."

Influence in France

Again, in reviewing the English school, Bürger proceeds:—"Reynolds un peu éclectique, avait été à la fois pour les Vénitiens, pour Rembrandt, et pour Van Dyck; West croyait ressusciter *Bürger* Raphaël! Tel autre était pour Michel-Ange ou pour Corrège; Wilson n'avait fait que copier Claude, maître absolu du paysage; Turner lui-même n'avait encore produit, à ce moment là, que des pastiches, de Claude surtout, et aussi de bien d'autres. L'idée de Constable était donc une idée véritablement nouvelle dans l'école de son pays, et, si elle avait été comprise et pratiquée, sans doute elle y eût produit une génération d'artistes vigoureux. À preuve, l'école française, qui s'est approprié l'inspiration de Constable, et qui est aujourd'hui, en paysage, la première du monde contemporain, on peut dire la seule. En Angleterre, au contraire, il n'a pas paru un vrai paysagiste depuis Constable. L'action de ce reformateur n'a point influencé son pays où le caractère national . . ."

This was probably true when it was written. Up to 1860 there is little evidence of Constable's influence on English landscape-painting, and though there is plenty of it now, it has come less directly from him than coloured, as it were, through French spectacles. Again, after speaking about the severe criticisms of "The Cornfield," exhibited at Marlborough House,

John Constable, R.A.

Bürger says :—“ Quel malheur que ‘ le Champ de Blé,’ au lieu d’être assez dédaigné à Marlborough House, ne soit pas au Louvre, où les artistes français ne feraient pas tant de façon pour admirer la franchise d’une exécution abondante et la solidité de la couleur dans les terrains.”

There is no ambiguity here, and this is pretty strong testimony from a French critic. I take another witness,

Delacroix the painter. We find in an article *Delacroix* on Constable, signed by Émile Michel in

La Grande Encyclopédie, referring to Constable’s pictures in the Salon :—“ Delacroix en avait été très vivement frappé, et l’on rapporte même que, sous le coup de l’admiration que lui avait causée ces paysages, admiration qu’il conserva toute sa vie pour le maître, il avait repris et repeint en quatre jours son ‘ Massacre de Scio.’

“ ‘ Constable,’ écrivait il plus tard (1858) dans une lettre à Th. Sylvestre, ‘ est une des gloires anglaises. C’est un véritable réformateur, sorti de l’ornière des paysagistes anciens. Notre école a grandement profité de ces exemples, et Géricault était revenu tout étourdi de l’un des grands paysages qu’il nous avait envoyés.’ Aussi Delacroix ne cessait-il pas de vanter les œuvres de Constable, à ceux qui, comme lui, étaient engagés dans le mouvement de rénovation qui tra-

Hailed with Joy

vaillait cet époque. Paul Huet, Dupré, Rousseau, et Cabat, associés des premiers à ce mouvement, saluaient aussi avec joie les œuvres de cet étranger et le concours qu'il apportait à leurs propres tentatives. En Angleterre, il est juste de le reconnaître, le terrain était préparé depuis plus longtemps, et l'on trouverait, avant Constable, bien des témoignages d'un retour marqué au sentiment de la Nature. Alors que chez nous on continuait encore à tailler impitoyablement et à façonner d'une manière grotesque les arbres de nos jardins, à y tracer des allées droites, des carrés de verdure, ou des labyrinthes, nos voisins laissaient se développer en toute liberté les riches ombrages de leurs parcs et arrondissaient avec art à travers leurs vastes pelouses les courbes de leur routes sinueuses."

M. Ernest Chesneau, in *La Peinture Anglaise*, says that Constable's pictures made an extraordinary sensation in France. They were so successful that the great modern landscape-school is *Chesneau* connected directly with him. M. Paul Huet was the first to discover the new way, and resolutely gave it his support, but alone; the example of Constable came to complete what he had so gloriously undertaken.

The author of *Recherches et Indications* quotes M. Amadée Pichot, a French writer who published *Lettres sur l'Angleterre* in 1826, and who speaks enthusiastically

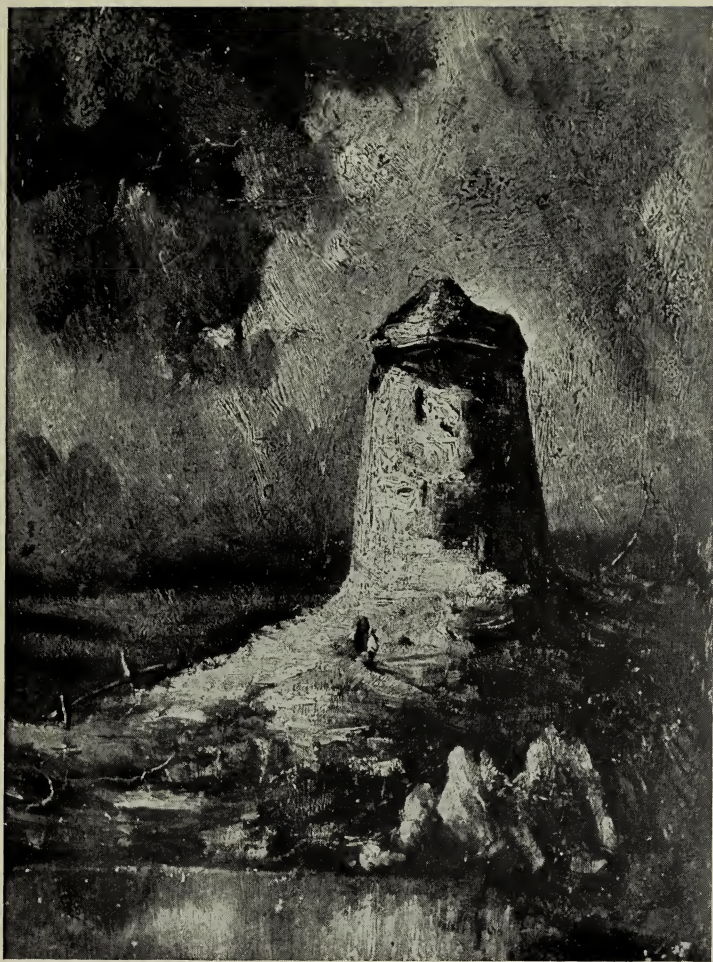
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cally of Constable, and maintains the superiority of the English landscape-painters to the landscape-painters of France. This author adds that as a matter of fact it was a little after 1826 that the landscape-school in France began to form itself upon the masters of landscape in England—Gainsborough and Constable.

This has all been written by Frenchmen for Frenchmen, and much more might be quoted to the same effect, but this is sufficient for my purpose.

I do not pretend that no French critic has expressed a contrary opinion, M. Albert Wolf for instance; but it may confidently be said that my view is not one that springs entirely from English prejudice in favour of a countryman, but is also held by eminent French critics.

On the other hand, Mr. W. C. Brownell, in his work *French Art* (1902), says:—"Neither Daubigny, nor Troyon, nor, indeed, Rousseau himself, often reaches in dramatic grandeur the lofty landscape of Michel, who, with Paul Huet (the latter in a more strictly historical sense), so truly foreshadowed and indeed initiated the romantic landscape movement, both in sentiment and chronology, in spite of their Dutch tradition, as to make the common ascription of its debt to Constable, whose aid was so cordially



"A Deserted Mill" (p. 177).

“A Deserted Mill”

welcomed in the famous Salon of 1824, a little strained.”

For Mr. Brownell the Barbizon School needs no other parentage than that of Michel and Huet.

In one sense these two opinions are not contradictory but capable of reconciliation. For purposes of comparison Michel and Huet were essentially Romantic, while Constable was essentially Realistic. The French school was a combination of both elements—the Romance,

*The
Barbizon
School*

already a possession of their own, the Realism, what they appropriated from their Northern neighbour. Although this, generally speaking, may be true, it is not without some notable exceptions. The illustration of “A Deserted Mill” shows that Constable was strongly imbued with the Romantic feeling at times. This small

*“A
Deserted
Mill”*

picture (undated) is painted with a simple palette, in grey, brown, and ochre, with a touch of scarlet on the figure on the bank. In the grand effect of storm clouds, in the broad treatment and sense of solitude pervading the whole scene, Constable here shares with Michel all those qualities which are the foundation of the French School.

But whether this explanation is completely satisfying or not matters very little; the point is hardly worth disputing about. It makes no more difference to the

John Constable, R.A.

sum and value of Constable's work than it does to the transcendent merits of the great French landscape-painters of the middle of the nineteenth century. The change had to come. The age which produced Byron in literature could not long be content to turn out painters who worked in the narrow groove of the old classical tradition. That reaction would have set in sooner or later in France as well as in England is certain, and it may be left to those who delight in these controversies to determine, if they can, the exact share in the total accomplishment of modern art to be ascribed to the various artists whose names have now become famous.

Whatever may have been Constable's influence over Continental schools of landscape-painting, it is quite clear that his art was original and unconventional. This does not mean that he learned nothing from the older masters. The influence of the Dutch masters is seen, especially in his early work; still more did he owe to Gainsborough, and a close study of some of the early English water-colour painters, notably Girtin, was not without its effect upon his work. On the other hand, no artist had hitherto so boldly discarded the conventional treatment and old traditions of the past. All the attractive beauty of the classical landscapes of Claude

Unadorned Nature

Lorraine, with their warm yellow sunsets, blue hills, carefully arranged ruins, groups of trees, and dancing nymphs, from which Turner with all his genius could hardly free himself, was put aside by Constable, and he directed his attention to a close study of Nature as he found her, on the rivers of Suffolk and Wiltshire, and the breezy expanse of Hampstead Heath. The broad masses of cumulus cloud heavy with rain, which he loved to depict, were often the subject of jests amongst the older Academicians, who then, as now, give but belated recognition to unconventional methods of work. Mr. D. C. Thomson quotes the amusing story (of which I gave a variant in Chapter III.) of Fuseli putting up his umbrella as he entered the Exhibition of the Royal Academy, and to the question of a passing friend, "What are you doing with your umbrella up?" replying, "Oh, I am going to see Mr. Constable's pictures."

Constable had a horror of mannerism, and rightly believed that no good thing could come out of a mere imitation of *technique*:—

"The mannerists are cunning people," he wrote; "and the misfortune is, the public are not able to discriminate between their pictures and true painting. Manner is always seductive. It is more or less an imitation of what has

*Manner-
ism*

John Constable, R.A.

been done already—therefore always plausible. It promises the short road, the near cut to present fame and emolument, by availing ourselves of the labours of others. It leads to almost immediate reputation, because it is the wonder of the ignorant world. It is always accompanied by certain blandishments, showy and plausible, which catch the eye. As manner comes by degrees, and is fostered by success in the world, flattery, etc., all painters who would be really great, should be perpetually on their guard against it. Nothing but a close and continual observance of Nature can protect them from the danger of becoming mannerists.”

But all this meant only that the artist must not be hampered by tradition, and by no means that he must evolve a style out of his inner consciousness, ignorant of all that former experience could teach him. “A self-taught artist is one taught by a very ignorant person!” is as true a saying as was ever uttered.

Notwithstanding his good intentions, Constable did not always escape the charge of being a mannerist himself. The *Spectator* constantly taxed him with this fault. Thus in its issue for May 21st, 1831, it said:—“Mr. Constable has a large picture of ‘Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows,’ which has all the truth and freshness of Nature exaggerated by mannerism

His own Mannerisms

into something disagreeable. The inky clouds, and the shower of meal that seems falling in the foreground, destroy the keeping and natural effect. Mr. Constable once painted with equal truth and freshness, but he sacrifices these real qualities to a trick of art." This picture, called "The Rainbow," was in the winter exhibition at Burlington House in 1903, and I should imagine that if Time has done no more to bring it together, this criticism was not undeserved: the clouds *are* inky, the middle distance black, and the foreground chalky; it is altogether unrestful and wanting in atmosphere, and, in my opinion, is nearer failure than any other picture of his that I can remember.

Again the *Spectator* writes in 1835:—"Constable has spoilt a charming rustic scene, 'The Valley Farm,' by showing it, as usual, as if a shower of sleet were falling from a summer sky. He prefers his mannerism to his fame." The "Valley Farm" was exhibited in an unfinished state in 1835, and Constable, as we have already seen, has told us that he afterwards converted the sleet and snow into silver, ivory, and a little gold. Finally, in 1836, the *Spectator* praises "The Cenotaph" because it has less of mannerism and more of Nature.

Ruskin, in *Modern Painters*, has frequent references

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to Constable. He was unable thoroughly to appreciate him, his own methods of expression being so entirely different from Constable's. Ruskin expressed himself in outline and line drawing with a minuteness sometimes inconsistent with any breadth of effect, and with a passionate devotion to accuracy of form and detail. Constable, on the other hand, felt more deeply the broad masses of colour, and was sometimes so careless of form that he deserved the critic's lash.

Ruskin's Point of View

The light curving tree trunk on the left-hand side of David Lucas's mezzotint engraving of "A Lock on the Stour, Suffolk," was selected by Ruskin to be compared with Turner and the early Italians as an example of what the drawing of tree form should not be, and it must be confessed that this is not a solitary instance. Similar tree drawing may be found in "Gillingham Mill, Dorsetshire," and in "Arundel Mill and Castle," where the ramification is merely a succession of graceful curves without any real regard to true tree form.

Possibly Constable would have admitted this, to some extent, himself. When he sent "The Cornfield," now in the National Gallery, to the Royal Academy, he wrote to Fisher, "It is not neglected in any part; the trees are more than usually studied, the extremities well defined, as well as the stems," as if this had not

Ruskin's Criticism

always been his habit. It was a question of what was essential in his picture. Draw he could, when he tried, as some of the pencil studies in the Victoria and Albert Museum prove, and the masterly painting of "Salisbury Cathedral."

With all that, the first note struck by Ruskin is that of praise. In a note to the preface to the second edition of *Modern Painters* he writes:—"The feelings of Constable with respect to his art might be almost a model for the young student, were it not that they are a little on the other [unconventional] side, and are perhaps in need of chastening and guiding from the works of his fellow-men. Constable, in his dread of saint worship, deprives himself of much instruction from the Scripture to which he holds, because he will not accept aid in the reading of it from the learning of other men."

Ruskin criticises his draughtsmanship unsparingly:—"I have never seen any work of his in which there were any signs of his being able to draw, and hence even the most necessary details are painted by him inefficiently." Ruskin cannot have had access to the drawings and sketches in the Victoria and Albert Museum, for with the studies of trees such as Nos. 1248, 1249, 251, and 252 before him, he could never have said this.

And then he agrees with Fuseli and calls his storms

John Constable, R.A.

“greatcoat weather and nothing more.” He is constantly producing Constable as a foil to Turner, much to the disadvantage of the former, not in the spirit of true calm criticism, but with the fervour and exaggeration of the advocate. He explains this as being a protest against Leslie’s praise of Constable, but if we remember his own unmeasured eulogy of William Hunt, it is not difficult to understand this uncritical attitude towards the earlier master.

If there is one thing that Ruskin detested it was the “blotting and blundering of modernism.” He cannot see that though more accurate draughtsmanship would have improved Constable’s works, it was more important to give countenance to the truth of open air, sparkling light, moist atmosphere, than to work on in the old groove and bind himself to the brown tree and to certain exact mathematical proportions of light and shade. As Mr. Hamerton says, “The painter must inevitably either have a tendency to breadth or minuteness of interpretation; he will either like mass or detail,” and Constable liked mass.

Yet, Ruskin’s final judgment is fair enough, if not enthusiastic:—“With all these deductions his works are to be deeply respected as thoroughly original, thoroughly honest, free from affectation, manly in manner, and frequently successful in cool colour.”

Daubigny

In their love of simple country scenery there is much affinity between Constable and Daubigny, though the particular aspect of Nature chosen for painting by each artist is widely different. The *Daubigny* latter loved rather the quiet tones of early morning and evening effects on the French rivers from a barge on the Oise or the Seine; translucent skies and clear reflections. He seemed generally to prefer the bright though tender colours of spring and early summer, to the heavier and more sombre tones of August. Constable, on the other hand, chose the sharper contrasts of midday light, the angry storm-clouds broken by bright flashes of sunlight, and the heavy greens of midsummer. The richness of autumn tints, curiously enough, had no attraction for him. He writes to Fisher, from Coleorton, in the middle of one October:—"I want to get back to my easel in town, and not witness the rotting, melancholy dissolution of the trees which two months ago were so beautiful." Still, both artists approach Nature with the same honest intention of painting her, so far as they are able, as they see her, not with the warm brown foundation and limited colour-scheme of the old school, but with the full perception and enjoyment of local colour both in shadow and in sunlight, such as had hitherto not been attempted.

John Constable, R.A.

Constable was pre-eminently a painter; that is to say, paint was the natural vehicle of his artistic expression, and a study of his pictures leaves a conviction on the mind that he could not have produced the same results by the use of any other medium. As Velasquez, as Hogarth, especially when he had no story to tell nor sermon to preach (to name but two great artists of diverse gifts), charm one with their power and skill in transferring paint to canvas, so that the scene before us seems inevitably built up to form a true and complete picture, so do we feel that Constable had a real insight into the qualities of paint and rightly turned them to his own purpose. Sir Edwin Landseer, as an instance of the contrary, was essentially a draughtsman; all the vitality, all the expression in his pictures are to be found in the drawing, whether of figures, animals, or landscape, so that to one already acquainted with his sketches, or even with the engravings of his works, the first sight of many pictures with their flat surfaces, opaque and slaty colouring, generally produces a feeling of grave disappointment, increasing with their size.

In another sense, also, Constable was pre-eminently a painter: he had a right sense of proportion, and true artistic vision of what is pictorial and what is not.

Things Eternally Fit

There is a class of critics who, while ignoring their technical qualities, will praise the pictures of certain artists for what they call the deep thought contained in them. But what do they mean by this? Of course, the artist should be thoughtful. Nothing merely superficial can escape the mark of inanity and vulgarity. He should love Nature, and should have a knowledge of, and a reverence for, all that he paints, telling so much of the truth about the object as he can feel and understand, with a right perception of its essential qualities, and with such technical ability as the gods and much careful study alone can give him. The extent of his success in this will be the measure of his greatness. But on investigation we find that what these critics really mean by thought is merely symbolism, something quite outside the purview of an artist as painter. I am by no means arguing that such embellishment can never be legitimately introduced, but I positively assert that it can never take the place of the essential qualities which go to make up a fine painting, or be considered any adequate compensation for their absence.

England is fortunate enough to possess in the public galleries in London a considerable number of Constable's sketches, chiefly owing to the generosity of his family. These sketches are of interest, more

*Sense of
Proportion*

John Constable, R.A.

especially to artists and such others who have some practical knowledge of painting, for the very reason that *Constable's* militates against their popularity. They were executed wholly for himself. There was *Sketches* no thought of making them attractive by any dexterous display of brush or pencil work, or of pleasant surface, and probably none of their ever possessing any selling value. They were not the faint ghosts of finished pictures, but the record of actual facts as he saw them; and maybe but one or two essential facts out of many that were purposely ignored.

They were, above all, the notes that he wanted—notes of open air and of sunlight, of clouds floating in the arc of the skies, wafted by currents of wind that enabled him to paint pictures which carry about no trace of the studio, but rather the scent of fields, the whiff of weeds and eddying pools.

The particular fact that he wanted nearly always had to be recorded quickly. Some cloud form (always changing), some effect of light and shade (ever on the move), compelled him to work rapidly, *Fleeting* and to be apparently careless of drawing and *Effects* detail. But who shall say that these fleeting effects of sunshine and cloud, of light and shadow, are not as true and as impressive as any of the details found or laboriously recorded by a more microscopic eye?

Along Constable's Road

Whatever may have been the opinion of the public and of critics in the first half of the nineteenth century, it is clear that since then Constable's work has been more and more widely appreciated, and his view of Nature more and more generally adopted by the best and most vigorous landscape-painters. I do not say that they have not gone much farther or shown originality of their own, but it is along the road he made for himself and not along that which existed when he appeared, and out of which he so resolutely turned.

Constable used water colours as a matter of convenience, no doubt because of the ease with which they can be carried about and the rapidity with which he could make his notes. But he cannot be called a water-colour artist ; in fact, his early sketches in the Lake District show greater skill in the management of colour washes than do his later sketches when he was a much greater man. Compare the view of "Borrowdale" in the Victoria and Albert Museum, dated 1806 (182), with the two much later sketches underneath it in the same frame. Compare three other views of "Borrowdale" (Nos. 185, 187, 188) with "Fittleworth Mill, Sussex," dated 1834 (No. 215) ; or the view of "Derwentwater," 1806 (No. 179), with "Well Walk, Hampstead," 1834 (No. 175). In the earlier ones there is a real feeling for the medium in

*His Water
Colours*

John Constable, R.A.

which he was working; in the later ones, however well he may have fulfilled his intention, he shows a fearless disregard of *technique*; he uses his water colours as oil paints, placing his lights and shadows directly on the paper in the crudest way, letting the colour dry as it may, without thought of soft outlines or gradation of tints. All delicate manipulation of the brush goes by the board, and there can be little doubt but that, unlike Turner, De Wint, or David Cox, his water-colour sketches were but notes of facts on which to base his pictures, and were not intended to be pictures themselves—the means to an end, but not the end itself.

Mr. Hamerton (*Portfolio*, 1873) asks the question, Was Constable a great artist? and proceeds to combat

A Great Artist Mr. Wilson's¹ verdict that he was "the greatest English landscape-painter," a verdict which I am not here concerned to defend.

But the original question can be answered without hesitation in the affirmative. He was a great artist. He was original, he was true to Nature, at a time when originality and truth were rare indeed; and if he was

¹ Mr. John Wilson (1812-88) was a well-known agriculturist, partly trained in Paris, and a Knight of the Legion of Honour. In 1873 he presented to the Louvre both "The Rainbow" and "The Bay of Weymouth," for which he gave 56,000 francs.

A Pioneer

not, in addition, always sublime, if he was at times somewhat coarse in expression, he was never vulgar nor cheap, and, let it be admitted, his influence on modern landscape art has been greater than that of any painter of the nineteenth century.

Appendices.



- I. PRICES FETCHED BY CONSTABLE'S WORKS.
- II. LIST OF CONSTABLE'S CHIEF PICTURES IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COLLECTIONS.
- III. ALPHABETICAL LIST OF CONSTABLE'S CHIEF PICTURES.
- IV. LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL WORKS RELATING TO JOHN CONSTABLE.
- V. ENGRAVINGS AFTER CONSTABLE.

Appendix I.

Prices fetched by Constable's Works.

The following is a list, with their prices, of some of the principal pictures sold from 1846 to 1902.

DATE.	SUBJECT.	PRICE.	SOLD BY	BOUGHT BY
1846	Landscape with Salisbury Cathedral, Waggon and Horses	£ 441	Taunton	Bought in
"	Dedham (the companion), 56 x 48 (see 1849)	357	"	"
"	A Waggon passing through a River	378	E. Higginson	Rought
1847	Yarmouth Jetty 13 x 20 (see 1894)	63	G. Oldhall	Fordham Colls
"	Dedham Vale Cows	52	"	Rought
1849	Landscape with Salisbury Cathedral	430	Taunton	"
"	Dedham from Towing Path (see 1846)	157	"	Bass
1853	A Lock on the Stour	105	Captain Gunthorpe	Gambart
"	The Jumping Horse ¹	393	Charles Birch	"
"	The Opening of Waterloo Bridge	252	"	Bought in
1854	Lock on the Stour, Dedham	204	Charles Oddie	Agnew

¹ Now in the Diploma Gallery, Burlington House.

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DATE.	SUBJECT.	PRICE.	SOLD BY	BOUGHT BY
1854	The Canal Boat	£	William Cave	Bought in
1855	The White Horse, 51 x 72 (see 1894) ¹	157		
1858	Dedham Vale (upright)	630	N. N.	Hodgson
1859	The Canal Boat	152	Charles Morgan	Bought in
"	View of Dedham	30	Mrs. Cave	Yates
1860	Stoke by Newland	197	W. E.	Wallis
1863	The Glebe Farm ²	105	Miss Morris	Cox
"	A Bridge near Salisbury	819	Constable	Bought in
"	Landscape—Man Ploughing, Passing Shower	99	"	"
1864	Rural Scene—Cottage, Two Children in Boat	102	J. Allnutt	Cox
1865	The Mill Stream, 33 x 38	71	Bishop of Ely	Dunning
1866	A Grand Landscape	693	N. N.	Brogden
"	The Hay Wain, ³ 50 x 73 (dated 1821)	278	Moore	Bought in
"	Trout Stream, showery	1365	George Young	Cox
1867	A Landscape	147	G. Pennell	Bought in
"	A River Scene	220	Teclanché	Grindlay
1868	Landscape in Suffolk—Cornfield, Figures	183	Wynn Ellis	Colnaghi
		294	James Fallows	

¹ Gained a gold medal at Lille in 1826. It was originally bought by Archdeacon Fisher in 1819 for 100 guineas.

² Bequeathed to the nation by Miss Constable in 1888, and now in the National Gallery, London.

³ Gold medal awarded when this picture was exhibited in Paris in the reign of Charles X. (1825). Passed to Mr. H. Vaughan, who presented it to the National Gallery in 1886.

Appendix I.

1868	Dedham Vale	157	Thomas Haigh	Cox
1869	Lady with Geranium	279	Captain C. Constable	Grundy
"	The Hay Wain (sketch)	17	"	Hogarth
1870	The Manor House	136	Edward Bullock	Agnew
"	Weymouth Bay (see 1872)	535	"	Cox
"	Rural Scene—Rustic Bridge	105	"	Agnew
"	Hampstead Heath (two donkeys)	588	"	"
"	Landscape—Salisbury Marsh, Bridge	399	"	"
"	Heath Scene—Cart, Cattle, and Donkey	787	"	"
1871	Dedham Vale	42	T. E. Horton	Bought in
1872	Waterloo Bridge	315	G. R. Burnett	Agnew
"	On the Stour, near Canterbury	477	"	"
"	London from Hampstead Heath, $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{1}{2}$	405	Joseph Gillott	
"	Rustic Landscape, $21\frac{1}{2} \times 17\frac{1}{2}$	367	"	
"	View on the Stour, 24×45	650	"	
"	Weymouth Bay, ¹ 34×44 (see 1870)	735	"	
1873	Heath Scene—Cart, Cattle, and Donkey, 23×30 (see 1870)	1050	Hargreaves	"
1874	Hampstead Heath (from Bullock and Hargreaves' Collections)	934	Albert Wood	"
"	Lake and Sheep	420	Adamson	McLean
1875	View near Highgate	178	T. Woolner, R.A.	

¹ Now in the Louvre.

John Constable, R.A.

DATE.	SUBJECT.	PRICE.	SOLD BY	BOUGHT BY
1875	Landscape—a Suffolk River, 28 x 36	£ 630	Samuel Mendel	Agnew
"	Landscape, 15 x 9	168	"	"
1876	Glebe Farm, Suffolk, 18 x 23½	388	W. Ellis	"
1878	Stratford St. Mary's, Suffolk, 12 x 19½ (see 1901)	325	Johnstone	
"	Hampstead Heath, 12½ x 19½	483	"	
"	Landscape—Ploughing, with Windmill, 10½ x 14	304	"	Bentley
1879	Embarkation of George IV., 60 x 80	430	Joseph Fenton	
"	Landscape—Windmill	152	Jonathan Nield	
"	Stoke by Nayland, Suffolk, 48 x 56	777	"	Agnew
"	The Thames, Westminster	430	"	
"	Malvern Hall	99	J. H. Anderson	
"	Vale of Dedham, 29½ x 49½	315	W. F. Matland	Daniel
"	Weymouth Bay, 21 x 29½	157	"	"
"	Brook Scene (from C. R. Leslie's Collection)	124	J. H. Anderson	
"	Lock on the Stour (from C. R. Leslie's Collection)	84	"	
1881	Hampstead Heath	577	Sharp's Executors	Permain
1882	Opening of Waterloo Bridge	98	G. R. Burnett	

Twenty-six sketches in oil and water colours by Constable were sold by his family in 1877, prices from £1 to £10; a landscape with horses and donkey for 16 guineas; a View of Dedham, 18 x 24, oils, £63; Valley of Stour, £49.

Appendix I.

1883	Helmingham Park, 44 × 51 (see 1886)	945	Scovell	Fielden
"	View on the Stour, 51 × 73. (Not <i>the</i> picture but a study for Holloway College Gallery)	1249	Dunlop	Martin's Executors
1884	Rural Scene, with Children	388	Duning's Executors	Agnew
1885	The Lock, 28 × 36	367	W. G. Vaughan's Executors	
1886	Landscape with Windmill, 11 × 9½	141	Addington	Permain
"	Landscape with Gravel Cart	117	T. Barton's Executors	
"	Flatford Mill, 23 × 35	336	McConnel's Executors	Brooks
"	Dell, Helmingham Park, 44 × 51 (see 1883)	1627	"	White
1887	Hampstead Heath, 1830 (see 1893)	1050	Constable	Stewart Hodgson
"	Salisbury	94	"	Agnew
"	View at Hampstead	63	"	Permain
"	On the Coast, Brighton	68	"	Nosedá
"	West End Fields, Hampstead	294	"	Agnew
"	Portraits of Anne and Mary Constable	77	"	"
1888	The Lock, 35 × 39½	232	Andrews	Frazer
"	The Mill Stream	346	Fish	Lesser
1890	A Coast Scene (study)	94	Constable	Colnaghi
"	Salisbury (study)	147	"	Dowdeswell
"	Carrying Hay, 35 × 47	222	Hunt	Lesser
1891	Landscape with Windmill, 15 × 20	210	Santure	Bought in
"	Hampstead Heath	94	Robinson	Agnew
"	A Lock on the Stour	94	Constable	Gooden
"	Landscape with Cottages	105	"	"

John Constable, R.A.

DATE.	SUBJECT.	PRICE.	SOLD BY	BOUGHT BY
1891	Dedham Vale	£ 151	Constable	Colnaghi
"	Dedham Mill	91	"	Wigzell
"	View on the Stour	105	Drake	Dowdeswell
1892	Noon (original sketch)	262	Collard	Gooden
"	Dedham Vale	131	Meldrum	Bought in
"	Landscape with Trees, 10 x 13	162	Murietta	Agnew
"	Landscape with Cottages, 10 x 13	105	"	"
"	Hampstead Heath, 6½ x 11	115	"	Hardy
"	Hadleigh	110	Constable	Boussod
"	August, 1821 (a sketch)	92	"	Agnew
"	"Salisbury from my Bedroom"	81	"	"
"	Brighton, looking East	309	"	Dowdeswell
"	Hampstead, looking towards London	472	"	Boussod
1893	The Mill at Arundel	71	V. Cole	Wigzell
"	Landscape with Sheep and Cottage	178	"	Wallis
"	River Scene, Figures in Cart	54	"	Wigzell
"	Waterloo Bridge	204	Webster	Lawrie
"	Landscape with Windmill	73	Murietta	McLean
"	Hampstead Heath (see 1887)	2677	Stewart Hodgson	Wallis
1894	View on Hampstead Heath	58	C. Constable	Frick
"	On Hampstead Heath	53	"	Tooth
"	The White Horse (sketch)	56	C. B. Constable	"
"	Hampstead Heath	75	"	"

Appendix I.

1894	Lane in Suffolk	55	C. B. Constable	Wigzell
"	Valley of the Stour	72	"	"
"	Yarmouth Jetty, 13×20 (see 1847)	514	Gibbons	Agnew
"	Dell in Helmingham Park, $27\frac{1}{4} \times 35\frac{1}{2}$	241	Graham	Gooden
"	Hampstead Heath	1837	Hebbert	Tooth
"	Dedham Mill	117	Cordrey	"
"	Scene on the Stour (The White Horse), 51×73 (see 1855)	6510	Hemming	" Bought in
1895	Lock on the Stour	105	Orrock	"
"	Brighton Beach	325	"	"
"	Near Bergholt	346	"	Lawrie
"	Barges on the Stour, $40\frac{1}{2} \times 53\frac{1}{2}$	472	Clash	Agnew
"	The Mill Tail, $5\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$	360	J. Price	"
"	Stratford Mill (The Young Waltonians), 50×72	8925	Huth	"
1896	Chisil Beach, Weymouth	246	Gooden	Wigzell
"	Near Arundel	68	"	McLean
"	Near Bergholt	94	"	Wigzell
"	Beach near Brighton	69	"	"
"	The Hay Wain (study), $13\frac{1}{2} \times 11$	157	Leighton	Wallis
"	The Shower, $9\frac{1}{2} \times 12$	210	"	Agnew
"	Embarkation of George IV., $58 \times 93\frac{1}{2}$	2100	Goldsmid	Tooth
"	On the Stour	199	Boussod	Bought in
1897	Salisbury Cathedral, 18×23	141	A. Wertheimer	Nathan
"	View on the Stour	75	S. T. Smith	Leggatt
1898	Dedham Lock	50	Houghton	Richardson
"	View on the Stour	420	"	Wigzell

John Constable, R.A.

DATE.	SUBJECT.	PRICE.	SOLD BY	BOUGHT BY
1898	View on Hampstead Heath, $13 \times 16\frac{3}{4}$	£ 252	Ruston	McLean
"	View from Hampstead Heath, $19\frac{1}{2} \times 30$	493	Harries	Bought in
"	Watermill, $17 \times 23\frac{1}{2}$	157	Odell	Blakesby
1899	Cottage in a Wood	120	Kahn	Gribble
"	Near Brighton	57	Wallis	Tooth
"	Windsor Park with Deer, $9\frac{1}{2} \times 13\frac{1}{2}$	52	Burn	"
"	View of Salisbury Cathedral, $28\frac{1}{2} \times 35\frac{1}{2}$	1365	Kalk	Agnew
"	Ploughing, $10\frac{1}{2} \times 13\frac{1}{2}$	241	Fowler	Radley
"	River Scene—Lock and House, $11 \times 15\frac{1}{2}$	126	Fuller Maitland	Wiggell
"	Salisbury Cathedral, $6\frac{3}{4} \times 9\frac{3}{4}$	73	Kermach	Wallis
"	Brighton (Sunday Evening), 6×10	60	"	Tooth
"	Off Brighton, $5 \times 8\frac{1}{2}$	63	"	Agnew
1900	View near Dedham Vale (Gipsies), $16\frac{1}{2} \times 27$	178	B. Moore	Dunthorne
"	The Lock, $55 \times 44\frac{1}{2}$	94	Mason	Ichenhauser
"	Landswith Soldiers on a Road	78	Fraser	Colnaghi
1901	River Scene—Barges and Buildings, 21×17	60	Wimperis	A. Smith
"	View of the Stour, 24×30	388	Alt	Tooth
"	Stratford St. Mary's, Suffolk, $12 \times 19\frac{1}{2}$ (see 1878)	756	Martineau	Colnaghi

Appendix I.

1901	Lands near Bergholt, 8 x 21	236	Pollock	Wallis
"	Lime Kilns, 9 x 11½	50	A. Kay	Shepherd
"	Yarmouth Jetty, 7 x 10	78	"	"
"	The Lock, 55 x 47, oil sketch	1995	Leatham	Vicars
"	Landscape—Boy Fishing, 25 x 19	50	Mainwaring	Colnaghi
1902	Hampstead Heath, 9 x 12	231	C. A. Barton	Dubbs
"	Brighton Beach, 12 x 16½	441	"	Agnew
"	Gillingham Mill, 19 x 13	1207	"	Falcke
"	Landscape—Timber Waggon on Road, 18 x 26	189	Thompson	Bought in
"	Hampstead Heath, 13½ x 17½	105	"	Dubbs
"	Dedham Mill, 24 x 30	304	Pitman	Leggatt
"	Hampstead Heath, Cart, 18 x 23	157	Chamberlain	Mrs. Rutson
"	Hampstead Heath, 10 x 12	84	T. Panmure-Edwards	Tooth
"	Landscape with Woodmen, 19 x 30	105	A. Tooth	Bought in

In 1899 Messrs. Leggatt held an exhibition and sale of 177 pictures and water-colour drawings which they had purchased from the Constable family.

At the Marquand Sale held at New York in January 1903, "Dedham Vale" was sold for 13,750 dollars to Messrs. Lawrie.

II.

Chronological List of Constable's Chief Pictures, with the Public and Private Galleries in which they are to be found.

A. PUBLIC COLLECTIONS.

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.

	DATE
On Barnes Common, 1066, 9½ in. by 13½ in. Purchased, 1879	1805
View at Epsom, 1818. Bequeathed by Mr. Henry Vaughan	1808
Dedham Vale, 1822 - - - - -	1809
The Mill Stream, Flatford, 1816. Bequeathed by Mr. Henry Vaughan - - - - -	1811
A Cornfield, with Figures, 1065, 9½ in. by 15½ in. Purchased, 1879 - - - - -	1816
Flatford Mill on the River Stour. Signed and dated, 1273, 39½ in. by 50 in. Bequeathed by Miss Isabel Constable as the gift of Maria L., Isabel, and Lionel B. Constable, 1888 - - - - -	1817
The Hay Wain. Signed and dated, 1207, 50¾ in. by 73 in. Presented by Mr. Henry Vaughan, 1886 - - - - -	1821
View on Hampstead Heath, 1813. Bequeathed by Mr. Henry Vaughan - - - - -	1823
The Gleaners, 1817 - - - - -	1824
Sketch of a Landscape, 1824 - - - - -	1824

Appendix II.

A Summer Afternoon after a Shower, 1815. Bequeathed by Mr. Henry Vaughan	1824
The Cornfield, 130, 56 in. by 48 in. Presented by an association of gentlemen, who purchased it of the painter's executors, 1837	1826
A Country Lane, 1821. Bequeathed by Mr. Henry Vaughan	1826
The Glebe Farm, 1274, 25 in. by 37½ in. Bequeathed by Miss Isabel Constable as the gift of Maria L., Isabel, and Lionel B. Constable, 1888	1827
The Glebe Farm, 1823. Bequeathed by Mr. Henry Vaughan	1827
Dedham, 1820	1828
Salisbury (without the rainbow), 1814. Bequeathed by Mr. Henry Vaughan	1831
A House at Hampstead, 1246, 13¾ in. by 11½ in. Presented by Miss Isabel Constable, 1888	1832
View at Hampstead, 1275, 19½ in. by 29½ in. Bequeathed by Miss Isabel Constable as the gift of Maria L., Isabel, and Lionel B. Constable, 1888	1833
The Valley Farm, 327, 57½ in. by 49 in. Bequeathed by Mr. Vernon, 1847	1835
The Cenotaph, 1272, 50½ in. by 42½ in. Bequeathed by Miss Isabel Constable as the gift of Maria L., Isabel, and Lionel B. Constable, 1888	1836

NATIONAL GALLERY OF BRITISH ART, LONDON.

View of the House in which the Artist was born, 1235, 8½ in. by 26½ in. Presented by Miss Isabel Constable, 1887	1809
Church Porch, Bergholt, Suffolk, 1245, 17¼ in. by 14 in. Presented by Miss Isabel Constable, 1888	1811
Harwich: Sea and Lighthouse, 1276, 24¼ in. by 19½ in. Bequeathed by Miss Isabel Constable as the gift of Maria L., Isabel, and Lionel B. Constable, 1888	1820
The Salt Box, Hampstead Heath, 1236, 15½ in. by 26 in. Presented by Miss Isabel Constable, 1887	1821
View on Hampstead Heath, 1237, 6½ in. by 12¼ in. Presented by Miss Isabel Constable, 1887	1821
The Bridge at Gillingham, 1244, 12 in. by 20 in. Presented by Miss Isabel Constable, 1888	1821

John Constable, R.A.

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, SOUTH KENSINGTON.

H.M.S. <i>Victory</i> in the Battle of Trafalgar, between two French ships of the line, 169, water-colour. Exhibited in the Royal Academy	1806
Doorway of East Bergholt Church, 224, water-colour, dated	1806
East Bergholt Church and Golding Constable's house, 583	1809
Willy Lott's House, 166	1814
Boatbuilding near Flatford Mill, 37, 24½ in. by 20¼ in. Sheepshanks gift	1815
Dedham Vale, 132	1815
Opening of Waterloo Bridge, sketch, 290	1817
Weymouth Bay, 330	1819
Dedham Mill, Essex, 34, 30 in. by 21¼ in., signed and dated. Sheepshanks gift	1820
The Close, Salisbury, 318	1820
Salisbury Cathedral, 319	1820
Water Meadows near Salisbury, 38. Sheepshanks gift	1820
View at Hampstead Heath, 164	1821
View at Hampstead Heath, 123	1822
Salisbury Cathedral, 33, 34 in. by 42 in. Signed and dated. Sheepshanks gift	1823
The Cenotaph, Coleorton, sketch, 835	1823
Brighton Beach, 148	1824
The Opening of Waterloo Bridge, small, 322	1824
The Leaping Horse, study, 986	1825
Hampstead Heath, 36, 30½ in. by 21 in. Sheepshanks gift	1827
View near Salisbury, 153	1829
View in the Close, Salisbury, 334	1829
Old Sarum, 163	1829
Hampstead Heath, 35, 31 in. by 24 in. Signed on the back	1830
On the Orwell, 160	1831
Englefield House, Berkshire, 345, water-colour	1832
Old Sarum, 1628, water-colour	1834
Stonehenge, Wilts., 1629, water-colour	1836

The following three pictures were bequeathed by Miss Isabel Constable as a gift from Maria L., Isabel, and Lionel B. Constable in 1888:—

Trees at Hampstead, sometimes called "The Path to the Church," 1630, 36 in. by 28½ in.

Appendix II.

The Cottage in the Cornfield, 1631, 24½ in. by 20¼ in.
 Gillingham Mill, Suffolk, 1632, 25 in. by 20¾ in.

There are also 95 sketches in oil given by Miss Isabel Constable, who died in 1888, and 297 water-colour paintings, drawings, and sketches, and a portrait of the artist at the age of twenty by Daniel Gardner, 1796.

DIPLOMA GALLERY, BURLINGTON HOUSE, LONDON.

Dedham Lock, or the Leaping Horse. Presented by Mrs.	
Dawkins	1825
A Lock. Presented by the Artist in 1829, on his election to	
the Royal Academy	1826

On the staircase there are 16 sketches, Nos. 61 to 76, presented by Miss Isabel Constable.

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON.

Portrait of the Artist, drawn by himself, in lead pencil,	
tinted, 901	1801

THE LOUVRE, PARIS.

The following particulars are given in *Le Musée National du Louvre* by Lafenestre and Richtenberger.

The Cottage, 1806, 20½ in. by 16½ in. Gravé par Lucas et	
Brunet-Debaines. Acheté pour 24,500 francs en 1873 à la	
vente du Marquis de La Rochebrunne	1818
The Rainbow (L'Arc-en-Ciel), *1807, 19½ in. by 25½ in.	
. . . Au loin, le clocher de l'église de Salisbury; au	
milieu des nuages se déploie un arc-en-ciel. Donné par	
M. John Wilson en 1873	1831

John Constable, R.A.

Weymouth Bay (La Baie de Weymouth), *1808, 34½ in. by 44 in. Gravé par Lucas. Donné en 1873 par M. John Wilson qui l'avait acheté la même année pour 56,600 francs, à la vente du Marquis de La Rochebrunne - - -	1827
“Le peintre et le poète respirent tout entiers dans cette page émouvante où vibre l'âme même des éléments que l'artiste a fixés sur sa toile dans une inspiration de génie.”— <i>Bürger</i> .	
Hampstead Heath, sketch, 1809, 10½ in. by 14½ in. Esquisse donnée en 1877 par M. Lionel B. Constable, fils du peintre - - -	1823
The Glebe Farm, 1810. Au milieu des arbres on aperçoit le clocher de l'église de Langham. Gravé par David Lucas. Provient de la vente de M. John Wilson en 1881, où il fut adjugé 3,660 francs. Donné par <i>Le Journal l'Art</i> en 1881 - - -	—

B. PRIVATE COLLECTIONS.

Mr. Lionel Phillips— Mountain Scene, 24 in. by 30 in. - - -	1808
Mr. James Orrock— Golding Constable's House, East Bergholt, 19½ in. by 29 in.	1810
Messrs. Lawrie & Co.— Dedham Vale. Bought at the Marquand sale, New York, January 1903, for 13,750 dollars - - -	1810
Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan— A Scene on the River Stour, 51 in. by 73 in. (The White Horse), signed and dated - - -	1819
Sir Samuel Montagu, Bart.— Stratford Mill on the River Stour (The Young Waltonians), 50 in. by 72 in. - - -	1820
Mr. George Salting— Malvern Hall, Warwickshire, oil sketch, 19 in. by 29½ in.	1820
Mr. T. Horrocks Miller— A View on the Stour near Dedham, Flatford, 51 in. by 73½ in. Engraved by W. R. Smith in <i>Finden's Gallery of British Art</i> - - -	1822
Holloway College, 44— A View on the Stour, with the Tower of the Priory Church in the distance; boats and figures, and children angling. 51 in. by 73 in. Purchased at Messrs.	

Appendix II.

Christie's in 1883, for £1249 10s. Formerly in the collection of J. M. Dunlop, Esq.	-	-	-	1822
Sir Charles Tennant, Bart.—				
Yarmouth Jetty, 13 in. by 20 in.	-	-	-	1822
Mr. Charles Morrison—				
The Lock, 56 in. by 47½ in.	-	-	-	1824
Messrs. Agnew—				
Brighton Beach, 12 in. by 16½ in.	-	-	-	1824
A Waterfall at Gillingham, Dorsetshire, 19 in. by 13 in.	-	-	-	1827
Sir Audley Neeld, Bart.—				
Dedham Vale, 56 in. by 48 in.	-	-	-	1828
Mr. George Salting—				
Salisbury Cathedral from the Avon	-	-	-	1829
Messrs. Agnew—				
Hadleigh Castle	-	-	-	1829
Mrs. J. M. Keiller—				
A Dell in Helmingham Park, 43 in. by 51 in.	-	-	-	1830
Mrs. Ashton—				
Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows	-	-	-	1831
Sir Charles Tennant, Bart.—				
The Opening of Waterloo Bridge (January 18th, 1817), 52 in. by 86 in.	-	-	-	1832
Mrs. R. Benyon—				
Englefield House, Berkshire—Morning, 40½ in. by 51½ in.	-	-	-	1833
Mr. Holbrook Gaskell—				
Arundel Mill and Castle	-	-	-	1837
Lord Windsor—				
A Deserted Mill	-	-	-	—

For the following pictures the dates cannot be given :—

- Sir Charles Tennant—A small version of The Lock.
The Corporation of the City of London (Gassiot Bequest)—
Fording the River near Salisbury—Stormy weather.
Mr. Stephen G. Holland—Salisbury Cathedral.
Mr. T. J. Bassett—Hampstead Heath.

Mr. J. S. Forbes has a collection of 59 pictures by the artist, mostly small. Among them there is a Dedham Lock, 44 in. by 31 in.

Mr. Alexander Young also has a collection, some of the pictures in which were bought in 1899, at the sale of Messrs. Leggatt, who had purchased them directly from the Constable family. Among them is A Bridge over the Mole, 9¾ in. by 11¼ in., painted in 1807, which Mr. C. J. Holmes describes as “a singularly modern-looking example of Constable's early efforts at realism.”

III.

Alphabetical List of Constable's Chief Pictures.

SUBJECT.	OWNER.
Arundel Mill and Castle - -	Mr. Holbrook Gaskell
Boatbuilding near Flatford Mill, 24½ in. by 20¼ in., 37 - -	Victoria and Albert Museum
Bridge at Gillingham, The, 12 in. by 20, 1244 - - - -	National Gallery of British Art, Millbank, London
Brighton Beach, 148 - - - -	Victoria and Albert Museum
Brighton Beach, 12 in. by 16½ in.	Messrs. Agnew
Cenotaph, The, 50½ in. by 42½ in., 1272 - - - - -	National Gallery
Cenotaph, The, Coleorton, sketch, 835 - - - - -	Victoria and Albert Museum
Church Porch, Bergholt, Suffolk, 17¼ in. by 14 in., 1245 - -	National Gallery of British Art, Millbank, London
Cornfield, with figures, A, 9½ in. by 15½ in., 1065 - - - -	National Gallery
Cornfield, The, 56 in. by 48 in., 130 - - - - -	National Gallery
Cottage in the Cornfield, The, 24½ in. by 20¼ in., 1631 - -	Victoria and Albert Museum
Cottage, The, 20¼ in. by 16½ in., 1806 - - - - -	The Louvre

Appendix III.

SUBJECT.	OWNER.
Country Lane, A, 1821 - -	National Gallery
Dedham, 1820 - - -	National Gallery
Dedham Lock, or The Leaping Horse - - -	Diploma Gallery, Burlington House
Dedham Lock, 44 in. by 31 in. -	Mr. J. S. Forbes
Dedham Mill, Essex, 30 in. by 21½ in., 34 - - -	Victoria and Albert Museum
Dedham Vale, 1822 - - -	National Gallery
Dedham Vale, 132 - - -	Victoria and Albert Museum
Dedham Vale, 56 in. by 48 in. -	Sir Audley Neeld, Bart.
Dedham Vale - - -	Messrs. Lawrie & Co.
Dell in Helmingham Park, A, 43 in. by 51 in. - - -	Mrs. J. M. Keiller
Deserted Mill, A - - -	Lord Windsor
Doorway of East Bergholt Church, 224 - - -	Victoria and Albert Museum
East Bergholt Church and Golding Constable's house, 583 - -	Victoria and Albert Museum
Englefield House, Berkshire—Morning, 40½ in. by 51½ in. -	Mrs. R. Benyon
Englefield House, Berkshire, water-colour, 345 - - -	Victoria and Albert Museum
Flatford Mill on the River Stour, 39½ in. by 50 in., 1273 - -	National Gallery
Fording the river, near Salisbury —Stormy weather - - -	Guildhall Gallery, London
Gillingham Mill, Suffolk, 25 in. by 20¾ in., 1632 - - -	Victoria and Albert Museum
Gleaners, The, 1817 - - -	National Gallery
Glebe Farm, The, 25 in. by 37½ in., 1274 - - -	National Gallery
Glebe Farm, The, 1823 - - -	National Gallery
Glebe Farm, The, 1810 - - -	The Louvre
Golding Constable's house, East Bergholt, 19½ in. by 29 in. -	Mr. James Orrock

John Constable, R.A.

SUBJECT.	OWNER.
H.M.S. <i>Victory</i> in the Battle of Trafalgar, 169 - - -	Victoria and Albert Museum
Hadleigh Castle - - -	Messrs. Agnew
Hampstead Heath - - -	Mr. T. J. Bassett
Hampstead Heath (The Salt Box), 15½ in. by 26 in., 1236 - -	National Gallery of British Art, Millbank, London
Hampstead Heath, sketch, 10½ in. by 14½ in., 1809 - - -	The Louvre
Hampstead Heath, 31 in. by 24 in., 35 - - -	Victoria and Albert Museum
Hampstead Heath, 30½ in. by 21 in., 36 - - -	Victoria and Albert Museum
Harwich: Sea and Lighthouse, 24½ in. by 19½ in., 1276 - -	National Gallery of British Art, Millbank, London
Hay Wain, The, 50¾ in. by 73 in., 1207 - - -	National Gallery
House at Hampstead, A, 13¾ in. by 12½ in., 1246 - - -	National Gallery
Leaping Horse, The, study, 986 -	Victoria and Albert Museum
Lock, A - - -	Diploma Gallery, Burlington House
Lock, The, 56 in. by 47½ in. -	Mr. Charles Morrison
Lock, The, small - - -	Sir Charles Tennant, Bart.
Malvern Hall, Warwickshire, oil sketch, 19 in. by 29½ in. - -	Mr. George Salting
Mill Stream, The, Flatford, 1816	National Gallery
Mountain Scene, 24 in. by 30 in.	Mr. Lionel Phillips
Old Sarum, 163 - - -	Victoria and Albert Museum
Old Sarum, water-colour, 1628 -	Victoria and Albert Museum
On Barnes Common, 9½ in. by 13½ in., 1066 - - -	National Gallery
On the Orwell, 160 - - -	Victoria and Albert Museum
Opening of Waterloo Bridge, January 18, 1817, 52 in. by 86 in.	Sir Charles Tennant, Bart.
Opening of Waterloo Bridge, sketch, 290 - - -	Victoria and Albert Museum
Opening of Waterloo Bridge, small, 322 - - -	Victoria and Albert Museum

Appendix III.

SUBJECT.	OWNER.
Portrait of the Artist at the age of twenty, by Daniel Gardner -	Victoria and Albert Museum
Portrait of the Artist, drawn by himself in lead pencil, tinted, 901 - - - - -	National Portrait Gallery
Rainbow, The (L'Arc-en-Ciel), 19½ in. by 25½ in., *1807 - -	The Louvre
Salisbury (without the rainbow), 1814 - - - - -	National Gallery
Salisbury Cathedral, 34 in. by 42 in., 33 - - - - -	Victoria and Albert Museum
Salisbury Cathedral, 319 - - -	Victoria and Albert Museum
Salisbury Cathedral - - -	Mr. Stephen G. Holland
Salisbury, The Close, 318 - -	Victoria and Albert Museum
Salisbury Cathedral from the Avon - - -	Mr. George Salting
Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows - - - - -	Mrs. Ashton
Scene on the River Stour, A (The White Horse), 51 in. by 73 in.	Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan
Sketch of a Landscape, 1824 -	National Gallery
Stonehenge, Wilts., water-colour, 1629 - - - - -	Victoria and Albert Museum
Stratford Mill on the River Stour (The Young Waltonians), 50 in. by 72 in. - - - - -	Sir Samuel Montagu, Bart.
Summer Afternoon after a Shower, A, 1815 - - - - -	National Gallery
Trees at Hampstead, sometimes called The Path to the Church, 36 in. by 28½ in., 1630 - -	Victoria and Albert Museum
Valley Farm, The, 57½ in. by 49 in., 327 - - - - -	National Gallery
View at Epsom, 1818 - - -	National Gallery
View at Hampstead, 19½ in. by 29½ in., 1275 - - - - -	National Gallery

Appendix III.

SUBJECT.	OWNER.
View on Hampstead Heath, 1813	National Gallery
View on Hampstead Heath, 6½ in. by 12¼ in., 1237 - - -	National Gallery of British Art, Millbank, London
View at Hampstead Heath, 123 -	Victoria and Albert Museum
View at Hampstead Heath, 164 -	Victoria and Albert Museum
View of the House in which the Artist was born, 8½ in. by 26½ in., 1235 - - -	National Gallery of British Art, Millbank, London
View on the Stour near Dedham, Flatford, A, 51 in. by 73½ in. -	Mr. T. Horrocks Miller
View on the Stour, A, study, 51 in. by 73 in. - - -	Holloway College
View near Salisbury, 153 - -	Victoria and Albert Museum
View in The Close, Salisbury, 334	Victoria and Albert Museum
Water Meadows near Salisbury, 38	Victoria and Albert Museum
Watermill at Gillingham, Dorset- shire, A, 19 in. by 13 in. -	Messrs. Agnew
Weymouth Bay, 330 - - -	Victoria and Albert Museum
Weymouth Bay, 34½ in. by 44 in., *1808 - - -	The Louvre
Willy Lott's House, 166 - -	Victoria and Albert Museum
Yarmouth Jetty, 13 in. by 20 in.	Sir Charles Tennant, Bart.

IV.

List of the Principal Works relating to John Constable.

Art Journal, January 1855.

Blackwood's Magazine, September 1845, vol. 58.

Brock-Arnold, George M.—Illustrated Biography of the Great Artists, 1889.

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Chesneau, Ernest—La peinture Anglaise, 1882.

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Feuillet de Conches, F.—L'artiste: École Anglaise de Peinture. "Le Paysage," 1884.

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Hamerton, P. G.—The Portfolio, 1890.

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Holmes, C. J.—Constable and his Influence on Landscape Painting, 1902.

Leslie, C. R., R. A.—Memoirs of the Life of John Constable, R.A. 1st edition, 1843; 2nd edition, 1845.

Muther, R.—The History of Modern Painting, 1895.

Perrier, Henri.—Gazette des Beaux Arts: De Hugo van der Goës à John Constable. Vol. vii., 1873.

Pichot, Amadée.—Lettres sur l'Angleterre, 1826.

John Constable, R.A.

Redgrave, Richard and Samuel.—*Century of Painters of the English School.* 1st edition, 1866; 2nd edition, 1890.

Redgrave, Samuel.—*Dictionary of Artists of the English School,* 1874.

Villot, Frédéric.—*Revue Universelle des Arts*, vol. iv., 1856.

Wedmore, Frederick.—*Studies in English Art*, 2nd series, 1876-1880.

Wedmore, Frederick.—*L'Art*, vol. ii., 1878.

See also articles in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, *British Encyclopædia*, *Chambers's Encyclopædia*, *La Grande Encyclopédie* (Émile Michel), etc., etc.

Graves's *Dictionary of Artists who Exhibited in London, 1760-1893*, records that John Constable exhibited 104 pictures at the Royal Academy, 32 at the British Institution, and one in Suffolk Street.

V.

Engravings after John Constable.

David Lucas:—Various subjects of landscape, characteristic of English scenery, principally intended to mark the phenomena of the Chiar'oscuro of Nature: from pictures painted by John Constable, R.A.; engraved by David Lucas, London. Published by Mr. Constable, 35 Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square. Sold by Colnaghi, Dominic Colnaghi & Co., Pall Mall East. 1833. (See Chapter V.)

Frontispiece—House and Grounds of the late Golding Constable, Esq., East Bergholt, Suffolk, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $7\frac{1}{4}$ in.

Spring—A Mill on a Common—Hail Squalls, 5 in. by $9\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Sunset—Peasants returning Homeward, $5\frac{1}{8}$ in. by $9\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Summer Noon—The West End Fields, Hampstead, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $8\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Yarmouth Pier, Norfolk—Morning Breeze, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $8\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Summer Morning—Harwich Harbour in the distance, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $8\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Summer Evening—Cattle reposing, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $8\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Dell in the Woods of Helmingham Park, Suffolk, $5\frac{3}{4}$ in. by $7\frac{1}{4}$ in.

Hampstead Heath—Sand-pits—Storm approaching, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $7\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Stoke Church, near Nayland, Suffolk, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $8\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Sea-beach, Brighton—A Heavy Surf, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $8\frac{1}{2}$ in.

River Stour, near Flatford Mill—Afternoon, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $7\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Head of a Lock on the Stour, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 7 in.

Mound of the City of Old Sarum—Evening, $5\frac{7}{8}$ in. by $8\frac{3}{4}$ in.

A Summerland—Rainy Day—Ploughmen, $5\frac{7}{8}$ in. by $8\frac{3}{4}$ in.

Barges on the River Stour, Suffolk, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $8\frac{3}{4}$ in.

A Water-mill, Dedham, Essex, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $8\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Weymouth Bay, Dorset—Tempestuous Afternoon, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $7\frac{1}{8}$ in.

Summer Afternoon—Sunshine after a Shower, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $7\frac{1}{2}$ in.

The Glebe Farm—Girl at a Spring, $5\frac{3}{4}$ in. by $8\frac{3}{4}$ in.

Hadleigh Castle, Mouth of the Thames—Morning, 6 in. by 9 in.

Vignette—Hampstead Heath, $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 6 in.

John Constable, R.A.

The following fourteen plates were published by Lucas shortly after Constable's death:—

Porch of East Bergholt Church, $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $6\frac{1}{8}$ in.
Gillingham Mill, Dorsetshire, $7\frac{1}{4}$ in. by $6\frac{1}{8}$ in.
Sir Richard Steele's Cottage, $5\frac{1}{4}$ in. by $7\frac{1}{4}$ in.
Jaques and the Wounded Stag, $5\frac{1}{4}$ in. by $7\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Cornfields near Brighton, $5\frac{1}{8}$ in. by $7\frac{3}{4}$ in.
Stonehenge, $5\frac{1}{4}$ in. by $7\frac{3}{4}$ in.
Willy Lott's House, $6\frac{3}{4}$ in. by 7 in.
Cottage in a Cornfield, $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $6\frac{1}{4}$ in.
Hampstead Heath—Harrow in the distance, 6 in. by 7 in.
Flatford Mill, Suffolk, 6 in. by 7 in.
Castle Acre Priory (adapted from a plate of The Glebe Farm),
6 in. by 9 in.
On the Orwell, $5\frac{5}{8}$ in. by $7\frac{1}{8}$ in.
Windmill near Colchester, $5\frac{1}{4}$ in. by $7\frac{1}{4}$ in.
Arundel Mill and Castle, $5\frac{1}{4}$ in. by $7\frac{1}{2}$ in.

The following are five unpublished plates:—

Opening of Waterloo Bridge, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $8\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Upright Mill, near Colchester, $5\frac{3}{4}$ in. by $4\frac{1}{2}$ in.
The White Horse—Barges on the Stour, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $7\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Salisbury Cathedral, from the Meadows, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $8\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Hampstead Heath, with Bathers, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $7\frac{1}{8}$ in.

The following are six large plates:—

The Vale of Dedham, 23 in. by $19\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Opening the Lock, $22\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $19\frac{1}{2}$ in.
The Cornfield, $22\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $19\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Salisbury Cathedral (The Rainbow), $21\frac{3}{4}$ in. by 27 in.
The Young Waltonians, $11\frac{3}{4}$ in. by $16\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Hadleigh Castle, $10\frac{3}{4}$ in. by $14\frac{1}{2}$ in.

All the above are mezzotint.

The following are not generally known:—

Cottage in a Cornfield, small plate.
Spring—Ploughing—East Bergholt Common, small plate.
Miss Isabel Constable when a child.
Mushroom Gatherers—Early Morning, unpublished.
Sunset, unpublished.

Appendix V.

River Scene, with Church, unpublished.
 Approaching Storm—View on the Thames, unpublished.
 Moonlight at Brighton, unpublished.
 Cottage—Syon Hill Park, unpublished.
 Near Dedham, unpublished.
 A Sandy Hill—East Bergholt, unpublished.
 Thunderstorm over a Rocky Valley, unpublished.
 Sunrise in a Mist, unpublished.
 The Departing Storm.
 Two small landscapes, unpublished.
 Small landscape, unpublished.

H. Dawe—				DATE.
Leathes Water, Cumberland, 15 in. by 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ in., mezzotint -				1815
John Landseer—				.
The Windmill, 5 in. by 4 in., line - - -				1822
S. W. Reynolds—				
The Lock, small mezzotint - - - -				1826
W. Ward—				
John Wingfield, Headmaster of Westminster School -				1827
The Rev. W. Walker, Rector of Monksilver -				No date
Frederick Smith—				
Brighton Beach, 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ in., line - - -				1829
E. Finden—				
Warwick Castle, from the Kenilworth Road, 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ in., line - - - -				1831
W. R. Smith—				
Barges on the Stour, 9 in. by 13 in., line - - -				1840
George Saunders—				
The Valley Farm, 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 19 in., mezzotint - -				1875

John Constable, R.A.

A. Brunet-Debaines—

The Valley Farm, $19\frac{3}{4}$ in. by 17 in., etching	-	-	1878
The Cornfield in the Lane, 20 in. by 17 in., etching	-	-	1880
The Water-mill, $12\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 18 in., etching	-	-	1883
The Hay Wain, $17\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 24 in., etching	-	-	1884
Opening the Lock, $17\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 22 in., etching	-	-	1885
Cottage in the Cornfield, small etching	-	-	1885
The Village of Foord, $5\frac{1}{4}$ in. by $8\frac{1}{2}$ in., etching	-	-	1889
Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's garden, 21 in. by 28 in., etching	-	-	1896

R. B. Parkes—

The Cornfield in the Lane, $22\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $19\frac{1}{2}$ in., mezzotint	-	-	1879
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Alfred Lucas—

Gillingham Mill, mezzotint	-	-	1879
Barges on the Stour, mezzotint	-	-	1879
The Lane, $22\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $19\frac{3}{4}$ in., mezzotint	-	-	1881
The Lock, $22\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $19\frac{1}{4}$ in., mezzotint	-	-	1881
Stratford-on-Avon, mezzotint	-	-	1885

M. Toussaint—

Dedham Lock	-	-	1882
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C. E. Holloway—

Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's garden, 17 in. by 21 in., etching	-	-	1883
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H. J. Angley—

The Lock, upright, 17 in. by $14\frac{1}{2}$ in., etching	-	-	1885
Dedham Mill, Essex, $16\frac{1}{4}$ in. by $22\frac{1}{2}$ in., etching	-	-	1886

David Law—

The Glebe Farm, 19 in. by 28 in., etching	-	-	1889
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Frank Short—

Flatford Lock, 13 in. by 17 in., mezzotint	-	-	1889
A Sussex Down (The Gleaners), $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 10 in., mezzotint	-	-	1890

Appendix V.

J. B. Pratt—

The Hay Wain, 19 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. by 28 $\frac{1}{2}$ in., mezzotint	-	-	1889
The Vale of Dedham, 23 in. by 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ in., mezzotint	-	-	1890
Salisbury Cathedral, photogravure	-	-	1895

C. L. Kratke—

The Shower, 8 in. by 11 in., etching	-	-	1889
Salisbury Meadows, 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 16 in., etching	-	-	1889
Hampstead Heath, 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. by 19 in., etching	-	-	1890

William Hole—

The Jumping Horse, 21 in. by 28 in., etching	-	-	1890
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Leslie Haynes—

The Cornfield, 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 19 $\frac{1}{4}$ in., mezzotint	-	-	1901
The Lock	-	-	1902

Norman Hirst—

Stormy Noon: Hampstead Heath	-	-	1902
Pulls Ferry	-	-	1903
Old Mill on Stour	-	-	1903
Salisbury Cathedral from the River Bridge	-	-	1903

A. R. Freebairn—

Salisbury Bridge	-	-	About 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	No date.
Tombs of Constable's Ancestors	-	-	„	„
Stoke Pogis Church	-	-	„	„
Thames at Oxford	-	-	„	„

C. E. Wilson—

Dedham Mill, 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ in., etching	-	-	-	„
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J. C. Bentley—

Valley Farm, 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ in., line	-	-	-	„
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G. Cousen—

The Cornfield, 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. by 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ in., line	-	-	-	„
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Louis Marny—

The Cornfield, small line	-	-	-	„
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John Constable, R.A.

G. Willis—

Jaques and the Wounded Stag, line - - - - No date.

The following are four original etchings by the artist, undated—

Netley Abbey, 7 in. by 5 in.

Salisbury Bridge, 7 in. by $4\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Harwich Breakwater, 7 in. by $4\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Stonehenge, $5\frac{3}{4}$ in. by 3 in.

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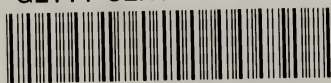
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